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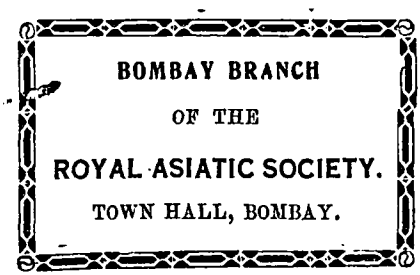

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF MY LIFE

AND

MEMOIRS OF MY MOTHER

BY

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE

AUTHOR OF

'HISTORY OF THE GIRONDISTS' ETC.

TRANSLATED BY LADY HERBERT

IN TWO VOLUMES

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THESE Memoirs relate to the first twenty-five years of M. de Lamartine's life. It is only the beginning of his history, in which he proposed to include all that had been previously published by him about his youth, and the early days of his political career. Time failed him for its completion. We are now about to publish the only portion which he had finished, and which contains many new and interesting details. For the first time, M. de Lamartine speaks freely of his childhood, which, until now, he seemed to wish to leave in the shade. 'There is no glory in a cradle,' he would say. No, perhaps not ; but when in this cradle sleeps one who is pre-

destined to genius, we like to seek for signs of his coming fame.

M. de Lamartine wrote these unpublished Memoirs at an age when our earliest recollections become to us the most real and the most attractive. Hence the freshness and vividness of the pages before us, although written by one wearied with work and length of days. They seem to be coloured by the rays of a bright morning; so that we scarcely perceive a trace of the heavy sorrows which overwhelmed the close of the life of this remarkable man. If his poetical genius be less displayed in these pages than in *Raphael* or *Les Confidences*, there is, on the other hand, a grace, a gaiety, and a frankness which give them a peculiar charm. In this outpouring of the writer's heart the man himself is revealed. In the truth of his sentiments one feels the faithfulness of his recollections. He seems to have curbed his imagination so as to give place to

memory alone, in that autumn of life when, to borrow some of the poet's own imagery, 'the leaves fall over the roots of the tree.'

Hence arises the real interest of the book before us. The statesman, the popular writer, had played his part, with which the world, at the time, was filled ; only a little reflection of past glory still brightened the poet's retreat. All that remained of Lamartine in the evening of a life so full of thought and action, and all that we shall find in these pages, is the man himself—the original Lamartine—such as his birth, his education, the nature of his country, and the traditions of his family had made him ; such as he was found at Monceau or at St. Point, when he revived the recollections of the past and related them, with a smile on his lips, but with deep emotion in his heart, to the circle of intimate friends who surrounded him. Those who heard him thus speak, fancy they hear him still. They will picture him in their minds sitting by his fire-

side, or under the trees of his garden, speaking of the past like one of Homer's sages, or like an immortal who watches and records the events of life without heeding the flight of time. Those who have not known him intimately will be able to realise what Lamartine was at home—a country gentleman, fond of agricultural pursuits like his father, and one who had retained, amidst all the vicissitudes and storms of life, a warm love for his native soil, a strong devotion to his home, and all the affection and reverence of his childhood for the persons and scenes of his youth.

In these Memoirs his whole nature comes out in its living simplicity. Lamartine's books are full of his genius; but nowhere else has he shown us so much of his heart.

The editor has made very few corrections in the original MS., and only such as were self-evident, and which the author would not have failed to make himself had he lived to

revise his work. He would have been afraid by any changes, however slight, to lose that stamp of individuality which appears even in the defects or distractions of this master-hand. Lamartine's glory is above all such slips of the pen, and will not suffer from the respect shown by his editor to this last expression of his thoughts and feelings.

L. DE RONCHAUD.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In undertaking this translation of M. de Lamartine's Memoirs, my only object has been to keep, as closely as possible, to the original. The peculiar style of the author rendered this a matter of some difficulty in another language, without making the translation too literal. Whether I have succeeded or not must be left to the judgment of my readers.

Mary Elizabeth Herbert.

Wilton: *October*, 1871.

MEMOIRS

OF

LAMARTINE.

MEMOIR OF THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF MY LIFE.

BOOK I.

I.

TO THINK is to live; to remember is to live over again: that is why I have determined to write my memoirs. I do not do it from pride, like J. J. Rousseau, that fool of genius; I do not do it from humility, like St. Augustine, that fool for Christ's sake. I do not believe myself to be either the first or the last of men: I think I am simply what God made me—a man subject to ordinary changes; placed by Providence in the world; rather superior to the vulgar herd; trained in a pure, noble, and virtuous home—an atmosphere indeed which does not assert itself, but which makes itself *felt*, especially by a child; afterwards perverted, although not radically, by association with wild and vicious young men of my own age, the contact with whom insensibly chilled both heart and soul; then brought back and

sobered by age to do my work of good and evil in the world; bearing ever about with me the remembrance of my father's honourable career, of my mother's tender piety; and at last growing old with a quiet resignation, submitting to the judgments of men, and waiting with confidence for that of my Creator—that is all! May He forgive and have mercy upon me! I ask but for His justice; for His justice is but the expression of His mercy.

II.

As to the interest which these memoirs will have in a literary or political sense, I do not exaggerate it one way or the other; but the following are the reasons which make me think I shall at least be forgiven for their publication.

I was born in the very midst of the French Revolution—a time of passion, folly, and fury of parties on all sides. My first recollections are of a father in prison; of a mother a captive on parole in her own house, under a revolutionary guard; of the songs of the 'Marseillaise' and the 'Ça ira,' sung in the

streets, and echoing, as it were, the anguish in the bosom of the families around us; of the dull *thuds* which followed the stroke of the guillotine in our public squares; of the march of half-scared troops all day long on the highways. I used to sing myself the songs I heard others sing—poor little, unintelligent echo that I was of a world into which I had just entered amidst smiles and tears! My poor mother used to look at me sadly enough. One day a change came: the soldiers overpowered the demagogues; the guillotine was swept away, and my own family could breathe freely again. We went to seek a humble shelter among our faithful peasants in the country. Little by little we obtained the kind of security granted to proscribed persons. Year after year my sisters came to brighten the home, which our devoted servants always maintained on the most comfortable footing; and here I grew and throve in the midst of our own people.

My mother taught me the existence of that mysterious and Divine Being who is Justice, Power, and what we call Providence.

This was to me a great joy: my little mind had been always working; now I had found a key to the problem of life—the only real and true foundation—in a word, I believed, and prayed. My heart opened to these pious influences; the spirit of a man began to develop itself in me; in a word, the child was being matured. Then came my school and college life, when rude hands fashioned me, in sad contrast to the gentle, loving training of my home. I passed through this ordeal, and came out of it transformed but not improved. I was an excitable lad, like a will-o'-the-wisp, with no very fixed ideas, and willing enough to float down the flowery stream of life. The Revolution broke out again, and I looked upon it as solving for me the mystery of the future. I went into the army: I loved the Bourbons, and thought I would die to serve them. But when peace came I was soon sick of a military life. Napoleon returned, and there was an end of my dreams of glory. I accompanied the Bourbon princes to the frontiers of France, but I did not go beyond—I felt that I belonged to my country above all else. Then came the

bloody field of Waterloo: the 20th of March was avenged, and the Bourbons were reinstated. I again took my place in their guard, both from a feeling of honour and of fidelity. But I did not remain there long: I could not stand a life of inactivity and of discipline without glory; so I again became a vagabond and a wanderer on the face of the earth. Travelling not only dispels our ennui, but interests and fills the heart. I led a life of pleasure and of love for several years; then followed sadness, dissatisfaction, and remorse. I resolved at last to do something, and went into diplomacy, for which I felt I was well qualified. Not long after I married a good and accomplished woman, who brought me back to all virtuous and domestic habits, and I became once more satisfied, calm, and happy.

The Revolution of 1830, which drove the elder branch of the Bourbons into exile, induced me to share their fate, in spite of the wishes of the Orleans princes, whom I was very willing to respect, but whom I could not serve. I started for the East, and for two years diverted my mind by travelling in

Turkey, the Archipelago, the Holy Land, Syria, and the Lebanon. I came home. My reputation had grown during my absence. I found myself elected a member of the Senate. I resolved to abstain from party votes or passions, and to devote myself entirely to the good of my country; thus giving up any chance of promotion or public employment, but preserving my own principles and self-respect. I conquered at last a certain position for myself, but with difficulty. Certain literary successes at this time added slightly to my reputation. After ten years, party strife and passions got the upper hand. The very men who had brought about the Revolution of 1830, and the Government of the Orleanists, turned against their own work. I opposed them vigorously; but I refused everything save the pleasure of defeating and overthrowing them. I could not bear that my indignation should be attributed to any other feeling than one of right. I repudiated all idea of intrigues and revolutionary banquets. I struggled at one and the same time against the coalition and the royalists of 1830. I had the happiness of being understood by the

country and the king, who sent for me and begged me to take office. I refused, though with respectful firmness. I chose to have no *rôle* but that of a volunteer: all for my country, nothing for myself. The crisis became imminent: there were risings in various places; the ministers lost their heads; the coalition disbanded itself; the king lost his presence of mind; the people were in a ferment. At last the Revolution, with which I had nothing on earth to do, was declared. I was only mixed up in it during the last few hours, after the flight of the king. I appeared like Fate, to repress and, if possible, keep it within bounds. It has been said and written that such and such a faction or secret society brought it about. This is not true. I can appeal to the ocular testimony of thousands—not in defence of myself, but to bear witness to the fact that, finding the Revolution inevitable, it was I who organised it; and unless we had been content with utter anarchy, what else was there to be done? I ask it of the whole of France. It was a bold step; but it was a necessary one. The alternative was only a continued and aggravated anarchy. *Felix*

culpa! The Republic once proclaimed, I found the means of moderating its action. France behaved admirably. For four months we governed in the midst of the storm, without what one may call a government at all. Afterwards everything was changed. I refused what was offered to me, and returned into obscurity. I had not the vanity to pretend to that to which neither my birth nor my talents entitled me. I bore without complaint fifteen years of unjust reproaches and of continued misfortunes, under which I am now sinking. I worked on courageously, however: I am working still. These events may interest my readers—I write them in good faith. May God be my helper!

III.

I was born at Mâcon, a pretty little town of Lower Burgundy, in 1790. My grandfather was a man of high rank. He was a fine-looking old man, but one who cared for nothing but the pleasures of society. He had served for a long time in the cavalry during his youth—without, however, rising

above the rank of captain—which was the custom among the gentry of the provinces in those days. He was very rich. His principal estates were in Burgundy, and in the neighbourhood of Mâcon; but he had also property at Péronne, Champagne, Monceau, Milly, and Ursy, near Dijon. In Franche-Comté, which was the home of his wife, he had also a beautiful estate, near St. Claude; the Forest of Fresnoy, of which the wood would now be worth many millions, but of which I witnessed the sale as a boy for about 60,000 francs to an old farmer, out of sheer disgust at having a few leagues to go for its superintendence; also a property at Villars, which he gave to one of my aunts; that of Amorandes, with the ruins of a fine old castle; that of Poligny; and last, not least, the valuable manufactories of Morez, which had been begun and worked by himself. He rarely went to visit his outlying properties. His usual home was the Château of Monceau, near Mâcon, of the origin of which I know nothing, but which I have a good deal enlarged, and which is still in my possession.

Monceau was then a fine country-house on the road to Cluny, with imposing-looking gardens, terraces, and lawns on the one side, and on the other a quantity of outbuildings and vineyards, with the houses of the vinedressers and labourers, which gave it the stamp of opulence and plenty. In the midst of all my debts and difficulties, I jealously guard this last remains of the fortune of my ancestors ; so that I may at least die where my fathers have died. In my grandfather's time there were at Monceau large vineyards, fine houses, extensive silkworm plantations, a pretty theatre, plenty of visitors, and stables full of horses for the owner and his visitors. It was his favourite summer residence. The views on all sides are magnificent. After passing through a long avenue, bordered with rich vineyards, the eye follows the road, which opens into a beautiful and fertile valley, the blue smoke from the shepherds' houses rising here and there among the trees, and adding to the beauty of the view.

After being set at liberty, my grandfather never went back to Monceau. Age and heavy cares induced him to remain with his wife and

children in his town-house at Mâcon: everything around him had become sad. In the evening some old friends or relations, and one or two proscribed priests, would steal through the badly-lighted corridors, and take their places almost silently at the whist table; for the Revolution had not interrupted the nightly rubber. But they played secretly; and when the game was over, they lighted their little paper lanterns and disappeared through the narrow streets of the old town to their poor lodgings, and went to bed noiselessly, for fear of awakening the suspicions of jealous or ill-disposed neighbours—it was still the reign of terror.

The family party in the Hôtel Lamartine at this time consisted of my grandfather and grandmother, who had borne him six children; the eldest son, a man of great merit and ability, and of studious habits, who had shared his father's imprisonment, although holding himself advanced liberal opinions. But it was a wise, just, and moderate liberality, the natural result of his distinguished education. My grandfather could not endure the

new law which had just then come into force, whereby this, his favourite and eldest son would share equally with his other children, instead of inheriting the whole of his property, as in former times. My grandmother, who had been born at Besançon, could not either accustom herself to the idea that he would only have his share, and that the others would 'rob' him, as she called it, of that which was his right by birth, thanks to some unheard-of change in the civil code. The second son, the disciple and friend of M. de la Fayette, who had procured him a canonry, with the reversion to a bishopric, had not yet returned from the pontoons of Rochefort, although his release was momentarily expected. The third was my father, the Chevalier de Lamartine, who likewise had only just escaped from prison, and who had been married for two or three years. My grandfather had given him a nice little detached house for his wife and children, which communicated with the family mansion by a long covered passage. Three daughters, all nuns or *chanoinesses*—Madlle. de Lamartine, Madlle. de Villars, and Madlle. de Mon-

ceau—turned out of their convents by the Revolution, and obliged to seek a shelter in the home of their childhood, took care of their parents, with a timid and obedient tenderness which was touching to watch. At the top of the house, looking on the garden, was another apartment, occupied by a dear old aunt, the only sister of my grandfather, who was called Madlle. de Lùzy. She had been for thirty years Superior of the Ursulines at Mâcon. Driven out of her convent, like all the rest, she had been received with open arms by my grandfather, and lived very happily in her retreat, in spite of her age and infirmities, and was carefully tended by one of her nuns, a sister named Nanette. My nurse used to carry me to her room regularly every day. Even to this hour I have an indelible recollection of these two women, who held a large place in my heart. Goodness is always fascinating to a child: holy faces, whether of children or of old people, have the same charm. It is the beauty and purity of childhood in both cases. Dear aunt Luzy! dear sister Nanette! before I knew what it was to feel, I loved you!

IV.

I lived for several months in this way. Then came a day when I was startled by seeing my aunts in tears, and I was told to be very quiet, for my grandmother, who was upwards of eighty, had just died. My grandfather, who was also ill, had me brought and placed upon his bed to give me his last blessing. He had composed some pretty verses on my birth; I found them, not long ago, in my mother's writing-table. He was very fond of me, and so he kissed me tenderly, and gave me some bonbons. Little as I guessed it, this was our last parting: he died two or three days after. I see him still: he was a magnificent old man, with his high forehead, and soft, long, white hair. He had been one of the handsomest men of his time, when he was in the army, and when in garrison at Lille, under Louis XV., he had been a great favourite with Madlle. Clairon, who had just made her *début*, and was greatly struck by him. I have often seen the remains of his

magnificent camp equipage, with its beautiful silver plate and silver warming-pan, and all the luxury of the young noblemen of his day. It was the bivouac of this reign; yet it did not diminish the valour of our troops at Fontenoy: Two of my uncles were killed by the English battery, and the third was knighted and received the Cross of St. Louis.

V.

My grandfather being dead, the division of his property followed. It was a long and thorny task. The new law, abolishing primogeniture, had scarcely been called into existence. The peasants, those sons of the soil, did not understand it; they felt it was contrary to their conscience, and so carried it out as inefficiently as possible. No lawyer could make the father of a family understand that he had not a right to deal as he pleased with his own property; and that by giving his eldest son the largest portion he thereby robbed the younger ones. An abstraction of right, or equality, has little chance of prevailing against nature.

My father was summoned to receive his share, but he never would consent to it. The habit of respecting the wishes and intentions of his father was to him a higher law than any written code. To profit by the new act would have seemed to him a positive sacrilege. He had received as a *dot* on his marriage a little property called Milly, worth about 250*l.* a year, and that sufficed for his humble wants. He declared that he was satisfied with this poor portion of my grandfather's magnificent inheritance, and renounced all further share. So he remained a poor man; but he won the love and admiration of the whole family. The rest of the property was divided by lot, which gave rise to long and painful discussions; but at last all was amicably settled. My eldest uncle and aunt, who were both unmarried, had the estate of Monceau and the vineyards in Champagne. My uncle, the Abbé Lamartine, had the Château of Ursy, in the midst of the forest of Burgundy, near Dijon. The house and gardens were magnificent, and the solitude complete. This suited my good old

uncle, who would not, to please the Revolution, give up his priestly functions; but abjuring all society for the sake of peace, was content to live as a hermit according to his own convictions. I have always loved and venerated this uncle, who was a real St. Evremond in our family. When I grew older I was frequently his guest, and always happier with him than with anyone else. Madame de Villars, the *chanoinesse*, who had made a vow of poverty, obtained a dispensation from the Pope, on the condition of being simply a distributor of her income, and became the proprietress of the rich property of Péronne, where she always lived in summer. She kept her promises to the Church with scrupulous fidelity, and became the generous benefactress of the whole neighbourhood. She was handsome and clever, thoroughly versed in habits of business, and was of great use to my father on several occasions. Madame de Monceau, who had all her life been rather childish, lived with my father and mother. She was always treated as one

of the children of the family, and by her large income added to the comfort and happiness of our home. The shares having been thus adjusted, every one went to take possession of his property. The Hôtel de Mâcon alone was kept as a common home for us all to pass the winter together.

Terrible are the vicissitudes of human affairs. I never dreamt, in this well-ordered arrangement, that this very Republic, of which I understood neither the name nor the object, would, after a long series of revolutions to which I was altogether a stranger, upset all our calculations, and drive me, in spite of an energetic defence on my part, from the home where I was so happy, and where I hoped to die. Why will man mix himself up arrogantly in the affairs of Providence?

VI.

I was just beginning to see and understand something of outside things when my father and mother carried us off—a whole tribe of children, in a long file of bullock waggons—to establish us and all our worldly goods at

Milly. Our dear mother was in the first carriage with two of my sisters on her knees, and another at her breast; a quantity of loose packages filled up the lumbering vehicle. My father went on foot as a sportsman, carrying his gun, cheering my mother, and helping the carriage when it got into any bad ruts. Two dogs in a leash followed him, and then two more waggons full of maids and nurses and household goods of every description, going at a foot's pace. Then came a carriage containing Madlle. de Monceau and her maid. All this formed a regular procession of old-fashioned equipages rolling and tumbling about in the mud, for the public roads in those days were execrable. The cries of the drivers, the lowing of the bullocks, the clamour and fright of the women servants, and the hearty laughter of the children at each fresh misfortune, made up a picturesque scene, which was partly amusing and partly touching. We did not arrive at Milly for five or six hours, although it was hardly more than twelve miles.

Milly was then a poor little village built

on the ridge of a hill planted with vines, at some distance from St. Sorlin, which was the rural capital of the country. When you had passed through the village, you went down a steep hill to the left and found yourself in a long and narrow valley filled with rich meadows, where a quantity of white cows and a few black goats were enjoying the luxurious pasture. A pretty stream, shaded by willows and brambles, filters through these fields in a blue silvery line, like a tortuous snake escaping from the pursuit of the shepherd. The water, now penned back by a little bridge which I have had constructed, then spread itself over the shining pebbles at the ford, making miniature cascades of the tiny river, and dashing against the legs of our bullocks and the wheels of our cumbrous carriages. After having crossed this little stream, which seemed to unite the plain to the mountain, you came to a steep and stony path, like a watercourse, worn by the sabots of the peasants, between two vineyards; and the bullocks, after having taken breath for a moment, scrambled and

struggled up with their heavy loads towards the church. It was not a church after all, for it had been destroyed; it was nothing but a steeple. This steeple was very ancient, and looked rather like a rustic pyramid, pierced with a double grating of carved stonework, upon which was suspended a fine old bell, now almost always silent. The children of Milly, however, pulled the cord morning and evening, so as to ring the *Angelus*;—that pious custom of our fathers, which even the Revolution had respected.

VII.

After having wound round the church and passed several houses and barns, the bullocks turned to the right, and going down another steep pitch, brought us into a large open court-yard surrounded by farm buildings, at the further end of which was a double flight of steps, and at the top a portico, leading to the front door of the house. This said door was rather like the keep of an old castle, and seemed as if aspiring to noble quarterings; but, by its heavy clumsy construction, it

had remained a plebeian entrance after all. It was, in fact, a very fair type of Milly itself, which, though a very ancient possession of the family, had been a portion of the Abbey of Cluny, and had been granted with a canonry to a great uncle of the Lamartines; so that, although in the gift of the Church, it had remained in the hands of the same family ever since.

VIII.

This double door was fixed in a remarkable way between two stone buttresses, curiously carved with various historical devices, the hinges being likewise ornamented with grotesque figures. Above, protected by an iron grating, were the armorial bearings of the family—an emblem which, either because it gave them too much trouble, or for some other reason, the fury of the Jacobins had respected. On entering, you came into a long, wide, unfurnished corridor: a few sacks of flour leaning against the wall, some cages of doves, and some hanks of flax and tow and half-wound hemp, were its only deco-

rations. At the end of the corridor was a venerable eight-day clock in a walnut-wood case, rather handsomely carved, which chimed the hours for the whole house. Turning to the left was a staircase recently built and still quite damp, which led to the apartments of my aunt, as well as of the rest of the women and children. To the left was a very large dining-room which led into a great drawing-room, in the deep alcove of which was our mother's bed. On one side a large window opened on the court, full of barrels of wine, workmen's tools, utensils for the vintage, and domestic animals, nibbling here and there under the fig trees and elder bushes; whilst women sat spinning, and children playing, amidst cats and dogs, cocks and hens, and all the litter of a farmyard. On the other side, a still larger window opened into the garden.

This garden consisted of a large square space of earth divided into four beds of pinks, and strawberries, and other common flowers and fruits, the care of which devolved on a vine-dresser's boy who served as gardener. The grass alleys were bordered by old fruit trees,

as venerable as the farmhouse itself, bowed with the rain and winds. A low wall of grey and moss-grown stones, all uneven and worn by time, protected the vegetables from the feet and teeth of the cattle. Two little summer-houses, or rather sombre grottos of evergreens, rather badly clipped by the rough pruning-hooks of the peasants, formed mysterious dark retreats at the angles of the wall, which we looked upon with a kind of awe not unmingled with fear. At the entrance of these little summer-houses was a carpet of the finest and greenest grass, where my father used often to sit and read, and my mother would nurse my little sisters.

IX.

From the window to the north of the drawing-room the view was wide and beautiful. It looked over the village to the slopes of the vineyards intermingled with crops of oats and beans; and then rested on the towers of an old Gothic château perched on a ledge of dark pointed rocks, called the Château de Berzé, which was looked upon as the great landmark of the country side. Its high-pitched roofs

and pointed towers were grouped together like the folds of a great mushroom of wood and stone and rock; so that the eye rested upon it involuntarily and returned to it again and again. It was like a voice from the Middle Ages speaking of times long since past, and stretching on to the future, defying ruin or forgetfulness. The very sight of it had all the gravity of history. Against the dark pine forest it seemed like a group of Ossian's—as marvellous and as indestructible. This ruinous château was the property of the old Count of Pierreclos, one of the oldest and noblest families in the country. It added the solemnity of the past and a kind of austere sadness to the varied and radiant aspect of the rest of the country.

X.

Ever since the spring, my father had come to Milly from time to time to prepare the house for his family. The Revolutionists had, to a certain degree, spared the old place, and contented themselves with turning the drawing-room into a dancing saloon on Sundays for the benefit of the neighbouring peasantry.

The sabots of the dancers had broken the old encaustic tiles into a thousand bits; not from pure mischief, but simply from a sort of pleasure at profaning a nobleman's house. We stumbled among the broken fragments of pavement until a workman had clumsily repaired it with large square common bricks. There was not much more damage done. The vines continued to bear and the fruit trees to blossom; so that the traces of the Revolution in Milly might be said to be restricted to the ball-room. Everyone—father, mother, aunt, children, and servants—had soon found his or her place in the house. Our only furniture were a few beds, tables, and chairs. The kitchen, soon filled by the peasant women, once more sent up the cheerful smoke from its wide, ingle-nooked chimney. The nurse and children walked and played in the corridor. My father spent his days in hunting or shooting on the mountains. My mother was occupied in writing, in the care and superintendence of the house, or in visiting the sick and suffering, with whom she at once made friends, and was beloved as readily as she herself loved all around her.

XI.

Do you wish for a description of these my first happy days at Milly? The account of one day will serve for all the rest.

No sooner had the first rays of the sun lit up my mother's room, than my father, who was a very early riser, went out walking. A maid used to fetch me and put me into my father's place, by the side of my darling, gentle mother, who used to kiss and pet me, and then teach me to lisp my little prayers. I did not know very well the meaning of the words, or understand what that Invisible and Omnipotent Power was, called God; but I knew I was doing like mama, and that was more than enough for me. Most good things are done from imitation. To try and be like what one loves, that is the first instinct of man. At any rate, it was mine. Reasoning one may dispute, but not that which has become a habit. My father was not a very religious, but he was an honest and an honourable man. The love and respect of his wife, whom he adored, made him pious almost in spite of himself.

After prayers we went to breakfast, I on my nurse's knee, off the vinedresser's soup, which I used to think the best thing in the world. Then I trotted off into the vineyards to play with my companions (the children of our peasants), or else, like them, to keep the goats and sheep in the mountain forests. We used to return when the bell of the old steeple rung the midday *Angelus*. Then a fuming hot soup with bacon and vegetables awaited us round the homely wooden table; a repast which I infinitely preferred to the pure white table-cloth and more delicate dishes served to my parents. I remember even now with appetite the little two-pronged twopenny forks which doubled into our pocket clasped-knives, and with which we used to pick out and eat the bouilli of our soup, in little bright red or green varnished earthenware bowls! Soup has ever since appeared a luxury to me. A cabbage or celery leaf, with a radish, just stirred in what is called 'teakettle broth,' with a bit of black bread, this is the true food of the country peasant. My simple life made me relish the homely fare of the cottager as much

as a child who had known nothing else. When I grew older, and was no longer allowed to run wild, and the age of lessons and school came, I was obliged to give up this simple food of goat's cheese, cabbage, onions, and the like, and made to eat meat, which disagreed with me so much that I had a regular illness in consequence; and, ever since, I have never lost the early tastes contracted at that time. Even when we dined upstairs, my mother never could persuade us to eat anything but vegetables.

After dinner, my father used to go back to his shooting on the mountains, sometimes alone, at other times in company with one of his head vinedressers, of whom he had made both a guide and friend. This man, who was in every way superior to his class, was called Claude Chanut, and became quite a favourite with us all. He lived in a little house close to ours, with a wife and three children. Nothing could be more edifying than the conduct of these good people. The father was slightly lame, which, however, did not prevent his being able to walk briskly and well. His

smiling, honest, bright face wore a kind of resemblance to that of the frank and jovial Chevalier de la Manche. His wife was the very incarnation of goodness; her two little girls, still tiny children, used to cling timidly to her apron-strings, and hide their faces in her gown. The son, who was a good deal older than his sisters, was gentle, modest, and obliging. He did not mix much with other boys, but helped his father and mother in the vineyard, was grave, wise, and silent, rarely sharing in the noisy games or hearty laughter of the villagers. But he was a universal favourite with them all, on account of his sweet temper and obliging, unselfish disposition. He became my favourite companion and friend, and our affection only increased with our years. He was the first to teach me how to love; and alas! also, how to weep, for the terrible conscription came and tore him from his family, where he was never again seen or heard of. The people of Milly even now speak of him with tears; for it was never known in what hospital, or on what battle-field, the body of this noble youth was mingled with the

many victims of those sad times. I myself took every possible step to obtain some kind of information, but in vain. What was a man, or a father, or a mother, or a family, in those terrible days? Simply an instrument, living upon empty glory, and broken in the working! His broken-hearted father, Claude Chanut, never got over the shock of his son's loss. Sometimes, though rarely, he would still smile; but his eyes were ever wet with unshed tears.

XII.

Sometimes it happened that we passed the whole winter at Milly, as in a kind of domestic convent, completely snowed up, but visited from time to time by certain old friends of my father's, who were living in hiding, as it were, in the neighbouring villages. First, there was the doctor of the canton, who lived with his wife at St. Sorlin, with a son, who became my great friend, and a daughter, whom I should have fallen in love with, if I had been of the right age. Then there was the Chevalier de La Cense, a retired officer in the Guards, living with his sister, Mademoiselle de Moleron, in

the same village, a cheery, jovial, good-natured man, whose arrival brightened the whole house. Then there was M. de Vaudran, of the Bruys family (one of twenty children, all distinguished in their different careers), living at Bussières, in the parish of Milly. M. de Vaudran, who was an old friend of my father's, had been secretary to M. de Villedeuil before the Revolution, and initiated into all the political secrets of the highest society in Paris. He was a Royalist of the good old school—moderate, impartial, and just towards everyone, even towards the men who had mingled in the Revolution, without having imbrued their hands in crime and blood. He took pity on my somewhat neglected education, and gave me my first writing-lessons on a little table in the dining-room, for which I have remained eternally grateful to him. His three sisters—simple, gentle, loving, agreeable women, and great friends of my mother's—often accompanied him to Milly. Although obliged, from political circumstances, to live continually in the country, and only associate with people of a humbler class, the natural

distinction of their manners, and the companionship of their brother, who always spent part of the year with them, gave them a high-bred tone which could not be mistaken; and their entire absence of affectation made their reception of friends in their own home most pleasant; while their natural grace and dignity gave a special charm to their conversation.

The Curé de Bussières, their near neighbour, young, handsome, mundane, amiable, and of elegant and refined habits, was full of respect and deference for these ladies, and he was also a favourite shooting companion of my father's.

XIII.

At a quarter of a league from our house, buried in the wooded gorges of the mountains of St. Point, was a site which has enshrined itself in my memory and imagination for ever. I mean the village and château of Pierreclos —the habitation of the old Count de Pierreclos, whom I have before mentioned. Walter Scott has nothing more romantic or original in his descriptions of the nature, habits, and dwelling-places of the Scotch lairds. Now for

a description of the château itself, its inmates, and the life they led there.

We used to go and dine there every Sunday after high mass; that is, at a quarter before twelve. After having clambered on foot to the summit of the Csaz mountain, which threw a long grey shadow over the Milly valley behind my father's garden, a steep and rapid descent to the right brought us into the Pierre-clos valley. A rough path, full of rolling stones, but shaded by old walnut-trees, led us by several barren hamlets to the head of the valley. There the aspect of the scenery changes; the hills, covered with vineyards, slope down towards the rich meadows, irrigated by bright and rushing streams, and shaded by poplars cutting the sky-line, like the cypresses of the South. Very soon the valley widens, and the eye is lost in a distant vapoury forest of pines and beech. The background is formed of dark mountains, covered here and there with snow, which lies in deep patches in the hollows. After having walked on a little way on the high road, we used to perceive a mass of smoke and vapour coming out of the mouths of the

village furnaces, which blackened even the walls of the old steeple of Pierreclos. But it was church-time, and we hurried into the chapel, where the priest was saying mass. The old lord and his family occupied a bench to the right of the altar. The family consisted of the master of the château, a gouty old man, but with a proud and determined countenance, who looked down with a sort of insolence on his old vassals; his brother, M. de Berzé, who bore the name of the old Gothic château of which we spoke just now, between Milly and Cluny; his five daughters, all very pleasing-looking, both in face and figure; and a young son, of about the same age as myself, with whom hereafter I was to be bound in the ties of a warm friendship. As soon as we appeared they made room for us in the church, and we were soon kneeling in our proper seats. The mass being over, the peasants separated. The old lord mounted his horse (with the help of his servants), and rode up to the castle by a steep paved road. We followèd on foot with the rest of the family, and winding through the vineyards, soon arrived at the iron gates of the château. No-

thing could be more imposing than its appearance as you entered. A vast courtyard, which led you through a high subterranean passage, or covered way, to the keep, from which you suddenly emerged into an open sunny space brilliant with flowers, growing up to the very foot of the steeple of the old chapel, which was built on a high terrace to the extreme left of the castle. Then the ground suddenly fell, like a drop-scene in the opera, and revealed to you a mass of towers and pinnacles and quaint Gothic windows and ornaments, the whole lit up and illuminated, as it were, by the setting sun.

XIV.

On first entering the large courtyard, I was struck at the sight of a new building not yet finished, on the windows of which the workmen, in fact, were still at work. It was evidently intended to replace the old Gothic castle, which, being mainly composed of keeps and square towers, circular staircases, irregular turrets, and pointed roofs, was more picturesque than comfortable, and rather gave one the idea of an aerial village. This old

fortress, in reality, had been built on the edge of a promontory, and followed the sinuosities of the rock both above and below, from the summit to the valley. The upper part formed an oval terrace, upon which all the doors opened, whether of the kitchens or drawing-rooms.

XV.

The apartments, with the exception of a great stove in an angle of the dining-room, and a magnificent fireplace of black marble in the drawing-room, large enough to burn whole trees at a time, had the appearance of rooms recently restored after a fire of the day before. The mortar scarcely filled up the spaces between the stones; and the walls, guiltless of whitewash, seemed never to have been smoothed by the mason's trowel. The flames had licked the paint off the ceilings, which bore the traces of an incendiary fire, seemingly scarcely put out.

'Look!' exclaimed the old Count, showing me the marks of the above-mentioned destruction; 'look at the traces of the passage of those brigands! Here was the torch of one, there

the hatchet of another, a pickaxe was the tool of the third. Ah! the rascals! I know them well; and never in my lifetime will I suffer the remembrance of these horrors to be effaced.'

In truth, in 1790, in the famous and inexplicable day called *du Brigandage*, this grand old castle had been completely ravaged, and nearly burnt to the ground, by the peasants from the mountains, who had determined to avenge the supposed wrongs of the villagers, and took advantage of the unpopularity of the owner, who was hated by the people, to carry out their nefarious designs. The pillage and devastation were indeed complete.

His wife and daughters were saved by the fidelity of two or three of their tenant farmers, and concealed in the neighbouring forest. The Count and his son escaped by a miracle, and swore to be avenged. His eldest son emigrated the next day. As to the old Count himself, he returned after a time to his ruined home, and went on living there till the day when they came to carry off the cannons of his terrace to Mâcon, at the same time that

his whole family were thrown into prison by the agents of the Revolutionary government. My father, who in 1790 was on leave at Monceau, armed and mounted the young men of Mâcon, and pursued the incendiaries to the Château of Cormatin, killing several in an engagement in the neighbourhood of Cluny, and hanging others on the trees by the road-side—a service never forgotten in the grateful memory of the old Count. The insurrection was at an end, and order was everywhere restored, until the day when the Government, in its turn, had given the signal for persecution, and imprisoned, as we have said, the whole family as Royalists.

XVI.

The head of the family had been formerly captain of cavalry during the Seven Years' War. He had been taken prisoner by the Prussians, and used to tell us how the Queen of Prussia, delighted with his good looks and cleverness, used to knock every morning at his door in the corridor, calling out, 'Count Pierreclos! get up, and follow the King's

hunting party! Your horses are waiting.' 'At these words,' he added, 'I gladly rose, and started for Sans Souci, where we used to eat delicious sour-krout.' The Queen of Prussia was always brought into the conversation.

On returning from Potsdam, he sent in his resignation, and married a young girl of good family from the neighbourhood of Lyons. She bore him five or six children, and they lived constantly in the Château of Pierreclos, the old Count being the object of the timid fear of the peasantry, and the ridicule of the middle classes. He was not a bad man at all, but absurdly vain and boastful, with a good heart at bottom, though often violent and rough in his manners. His wife had died during their imprisonment. The eldest of his sons had emigrated; the youngest, who was called the Chevalier de Pierreclos, was a boy of my own age, brave, clever, and intelligent, left to nature, and with scarcely any education; but giving promise of what he afterwards became —a brilliant adventurer, like the Chevalier de Grammont, a hero of the civil wars, of romantic love affairs, of duels, horses, and all that is

comprehended in the old term of a 'free lance.' We were intimate from children, and shared in all boyish sports.

His sisters, older than himself, were handsome, *piquante* and original. As they had no mother, they had consequently little or no education, properly so called: they, in fact, brought up one another. There was certainly in the château an old aunt, the only sister of the Count, a clever woman, and as strange as himself; but who could only have taught cards to her pretty nieces, that being the one occupation of Madame de Moirode from morning till night. She used to come into the drawing-room at eight o'clock in the morning, and sit on a curtained seat, like Madame du Deffant! Then lowering the curtains round her on three sides, to keep out the draught, she would offer cards to all comers: brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, friends—no matter who!—playing without a moment's intermission from one meal to another; resting for a few minutes, perhaps, in the middle of the day, and beginning again with any new comers till supper-time.

The Chevalier de Berzé, an old cavalry officer like his brother, the Count de Pierreclos, ran through his whole fortune very early in life, and now had accepted the posts of agent and gardener to the family. In the drawing-room his only functions seemed to be to provide fresh cards, and to bring in fresh logs for the fire. He was a thoroughly good-natured 'serviceable' fellow, ready to do a kind turn to everybody, and universally beloved. I saw him live, grow old, and die, like a living piece of furniture, having no idea in life but that of saying 'Yes' to everything proposed by his brother; of bringing the finest melons from the garden to the dining-room, the most beautiful flowers to his nieces, and fresh faggots for the inexhaustible fireplaces in both apartments.

After dinner we all went back to the drawing-room, and our elders began playing at cards, which lasted till sunset. During that time, however, the young people would often escape upstairs to sing or play, and the sound of the piano echoed cheerily through the long corridors and staircases. The young chevalier

and I used to go out on the terrace and see the dogs in the kennel or the horses in the stable. One day I recollect that we loaded the little cannon at the door of the chapel, and having stuffed it with powder up to the muzzle, set fire to it, and nearly blew off our own heads in the attempt.

In the evening we all turned our steps homewards, the Pierreclos family escorting us part of the way. Such was the dawn of my life in the bosom of my family. Everything around me was innocent, calm, pious, gay, rustic, and gentle; like a puff of soft spring wind at one's window. When the first rays of the sun lit up our bedrooms, the doors opened, the young girls of the village came into the house, some to work, some to help to dress us, children, to brush our hair and tie our shoes, and fill the house with their gay voices and laughter, much as the sun brought us light and warmth. The cocks crowed, the dogs barked, the cats purred, the little birds filled the whole air with song. Thus our day began. We used to run down to drink our coffee and milk in the kitchen,

and then rush into the garden to gather the freshest roses all glistening with the early dew. From time to time we heard the echo of our father's gun while we watched the fresh morning breeze chasing the mists across the heath. All was happy, sweet, joyous, and bright!

XVII.

But when the time of the vintage drew near, everything assumed an aspect of work and life and gaiety, which metamorphosed the whole country. The peasants loaded their carts with water thoroughly to cleanse the deep winepresses which were to hold the grapes. The bullocks, coupled together and harnessed at dawn, lifted their intelligent heads and velvety eyes under the heavy yoke; or else ruminated, by the side of the pole, the armsfull of hay which the children gave them. The women, lifting us up in their arms, would help us to scramble up by the axle of the wheels into the vat. This was a large, oval kind of bath, in which the vinedresser goes to the vineyard, and which he there fills with great bunches of cut grapes to bring them back to the wine-

press. Then we were lifted out by the workmen, and our places filled by the contents of their baskets. A quantity of sticky flies and wasps, drunk with the juice of the grape which had already begun to ferment, fell with the fruit into the vat, but either instinct or satiety prevented their stinging us.

Thus we went joyfully from one vine to the other, helping to cut the rich bunches and fill the baskets or bins of one set of reapers after the other. The cleverest and handiest girls from the neighbouring villages formed themselves into bands, slept in the barn at Milly, and were hired as cutters by the owners of the vineyards. They used to walk singing, their pails on their heads, or their baskets on their arms, behind the one who served as guide in the narrow paths between the vines; and then placing themselves by twenties or thirties, each at the foot of a vine stock, would quickly clear the whole stem with careful, skilful hands, of its rich white or blue burden, squash them in their fingers, and throw them into the bins, which the boys would then carry off to the carts. The very vineyards

seemed to sing as their rich produce fell under the scissors; the earth, as it were, rejoiced at her spoil. We, children, used to follow the carts dripping with their juicy burden; our little pinafores all stained with the blood of the grape, and meeting with joyous cries each fresh band of workers. The joy ran like the wine from hill to hill. Then we helped to empty the grapes from the vat to the wine-press; or gathered bunches of fresh grapes to refresh the tired bullocks, whose carts creaked under their heavy load. Then we would count the number of bins, and run to tell our father, who would calculate the numbers of tuns of wine which would be the final result, and which, in reality, formed our whole income for the year. A few days after, the same work was begun again, until the leaves of the vine, all yellow and seared, had no more fruit to conceal; until, in fact, the vintage being over and the barrels filled to the brim with wine, the vines were left desolate, the goats picked off the few remaining leaves, and the once busy paths were still as death.

XVIII.

Then began the spinning of the flax and hemp in the evenings at home; or else the cracking of the walnuts, which was the last gay work of the season for the villagers. The mistress of the house, by the light of a rustic lamp called a *creuse-yeux*, gathered round the large kitchen table, children, servants, visitors, and neighbours. The men went to the cellar and brought out huge sacks of nuts, of which the husk, already half rotten, was easily detached from the shell, and threw them on the floor. Every one, armed with a hammer, set to work on a heap of this rich fruit before him, to crack the nuts carefully, and take out the kernel (if possible entire) and put them in little heaps, either for sale or for the oil mill. Gay laughter and innocent conversation echoed from one end of the room to the other, and made the work seem like play. When all was done, dancing began, and generally continued till midnight.

It was the same with the weaving of the

hemp and flax, which used to occupy the winter evenings in the great barn until the tow merchant came round and bargained for the long hanks of yarn and vegetable silk, the produce of which was the gain of the wives and daughters and women-servants of the house, and often served to keep them in clothes altogether. We used to take our share in all these works with our servants and peasants, as was the custom in those primitive days. The presence of our gentle mother was a check on any light or improper word or action; for she had won the respect and love of the whole neighbourhood.

XIX.

Our conversation at these gatherings was generally on the subject of the good or bad crops; the price of wine or wheat; the marriage of this or that village lad or girl; the wages of the women-servants, which generally consisted of ten crowns (thirty francs) a year, six yards of unbleached linen for shifts, two pairs of *sabots*, a few yards of stuff for petticoats, and five francs as a present on New

Year's Day. These were the current wages of servants in those days. They are now at least ten times as much; but I doubt if the people themselves are one whit richer or happier. Money only represents, under one denomination or other, a certain amount of wants. All is equal, except in the mind of man.

Very often, on coming out of some sanguinary revolutionary crisis, very terrible at the time, perhaps, but quickly forgotten, the talk among the elder men became political—that is to say, military. Itinerant hawkers used to come round to our doors, crying out, 'Great battle between the French, under command of General Buonaparte, in Italy, and the English or Germans' (or else it was 'Moreau on the Rhine,' or 'Massena in Switzerland,' or 'Macdonald in Suabia,' or 'Hoche in the Palatinate,' or 'Marceau in Germany).' Then the peasant would rush out of his cabin, while the hawker unrolled to his admiring eyes highly-coloured portraits of heroes, and he listened with all his ears to the startling tale of battles won, and heroic escapes, or glorious death-scenes; and bought for a penny the true (?) history of all

these feats of arms. He would then nail them up on his wall, or get his wife to sew them on the serge curtains of his bed, where they remained for himself and his family as a true history of France and of her doughty deeds to all time.

The first political enthusiasm with which I was myself fired was in the village square adjoining our own courtyard. There was a young man named Janin, a little better educated than his neighbours, who taught the village children the elements of reading and writing. One day he stepped out of the cabin which served as a school, and sounding a drum and a clarionet of which he had somehow become possessed, he quickly attracted all the boys and girls in Milly; to whom he commenced showing off a quantity of pictures of military heroes, which he had obtained from one of these hawkers, who was standing by his side. 'Look,' he exclaimed, 'at this picture of the battle of the Pyramids, gained by General Buonaparte! He is this little dark, thin man, whom you see here mounted on a horse as yellow as gold, which is rearing and

plunging, with his long sabre in his hand, before that mass of cut stone which is called the Pyramids, and who is saying to his soldiers, "From up there, forty centuries look down upon you."'

But his eloquence was rather lost on his audience, who did not understand a word of it, and preferred Augereau galloping on a white charger and crossing the Rhine with one bound, as if he had been carried on the wings of Victory herself; or Berthier, tearing a swan's quill from his floating plume to write the staff orders with a pensive countenance. But Kléber, with his drum-major's figure and size, carried the day, and excited the enthusiasm and plaudits of the whole hamlet.

The hawker passed the morning selling these pictures of national glory from house to house, with Janin to explain the subjects of each. His enthusiasm spread the excitement over the whole country, and no one shared in it more vividly than myself. It was thus that I first began to understand what was meant by military glory. A horse, a plume, a sabre were henceforth to me symbolical of great

things. The people were fired with a military ardour, which lasted a long time. All through the winter evenings nothing was talked of but the hawker, and Janin was continually summoned to explain again the text of these wonderful, and of course *truthful*, pictures.

XX.

Time went on, and I was eleven years old. My father began to talk seriously of sending me to school; but it was difficult to decide, because, since the Revolution, no public school existed, if we except certain private houses, more or less famous, at Paris or at Lyons, and a College of Jesuits (who were then called *Fathers of the Faith*), whom the uncle of Buonaparte, Cardinal Fesch, protected, on the frontiers of Italy, in the little town of Belley, in Bugey. My mother very much wished that my father would decide on sending me to this college, which had a very high reputation for piety and learning. The greater portion of the noble families of Piémont, Lombardy, Turin, Alessandria, and Milan, sent their children there. But my mother was op-

posed by all the rest of the family, who wished me to go to a private house in Lyons, called the House of *La Caille*, at la Croix Rousse, and which also was well spoken of. My uncle, M. de Lamartine, did not much like the Jesuits; my father was indifferent, but above all wished to please his brothers and sisters, on whom my future fortune depended. So that he ended by saying 'Yes,' and my mother, rather sorrowfully, took me to Lyons.

XXI.

How sad was my departure from Milly! It was the first deep wound my heart had received, and I felt it bitterly. How broken-hearted I was at saying good-bye to the old servants, who all loved me, and I them, and especially Janette, a charming and beautiful girl from the mountains, whom I cried terribly at parting with, and whom I left equally bathed in tears! Janette came to kiss me in my little bed, and I started for Lyons as if it were (as in reality it was to me) for the other world. From that hour Milly, its rocks and vineyards, its peasants and servants, and all belonging to it,

seemed to be graven in my memory as a warm and living thing which formed part of my very self. Alas! I have had to part with it all since, down to the very stones. And when I pass by the road, I turn away my head, that I may not see it, and do not look round till the ruined steeple and vine-covered hills have altogether disappeared from my sight.

BOOK II.

I.

THE family coach brought my mother and myself the next day to Lyons. We stopped at Madame de Roquemont's, a good and tender-hearted woman, and a cousin of my mother's, who loved her like a sister.

She lived in the Rue .St. Dominique, near the Place de Bellecour, which had been ruined at that time by the pickaxes of the Revolutionists. Opposite Madame de Roquemont's house was a wholesale bookseller's, named Leroy. He had a large family of children, one more beautiful than the other, who spent most of their time on the balcony opposite my room. Amidst these living flowers there was one, a girl of twelve or fourteen, whose like I have never seen before or since. She had the most delicate features, blue eyes, skin as white as the finest Chinese paper, and an expression of such deep thought and feeling, that it remained indelibly impressed

on my dreams. Her long fair hair fell in heavy curls on her neck and shoulders; while her beautifully slight and graceful figure, her dreamy, earnest face, and her white forehead, leaning on the edge of the balcony, made such an impression upon me, that although I was then only eleven years old, I have never forgotten it all my life. I used to spend hours watching her behind the glass panes of my little window, and every turn in her face seemed to me more lovely than before. Perfect beauty defies oblivion. Whenever I have wanted to paint a faultless or divine being, superior to every one else on earth, I have always had *her* in my mind. Man, after all, rarely invents anything —he remembers.

This incomparable child married, a few years after, a M. Pelaprat, a financier of Lyons, who was doubtless won by her charms and exceeding beauty. She had several children, all worthy of their mother, and, among the rest, the Princesse de Chimay, whose enchanting face had the same type. Twenty years ago a singular thing happened to me with regard to this lady, and which,

until now, I have never mentioned to a soul. One day I was waiting in an anteroom at Paris, where one often met persons whom etiquette prevented one's speaking to without an introduction, and there came in a very pretty person from eighteen to twenty years of age, who sat down at the further end of the room. At first I did not dare speak; but as our time of waiting seemed to be indefinitely prolonged, and we were *tête-à-tête*, I ventured at last to say some insignificant words. Our conversation became more easy as we went on, and at last I ventured to ask her her name. 'I am the Princesse de Chimay,' she replied. 'I thought so!' I answered joyfully. 'How so?' she asked with surprise. 'Because I knew your mother thirty years ago.'

In truth, certain charms are hereditary, and can never be mistaken.

Madame Pelaprat, who established herself later in Paris, was an object of respectful admiration to Napoleon himself. When he returned from the Isle of Elba to Lyons he asked to see her, and she came to the archbishop's palace where he lodged. I suppose

he thought her beautiful eyes would bring him luck! They say he received her as if she had been a goddess; but he had himself lost his 'prestige,' and the great man had dwindled into an unprincipled usurper.

II.

During my stay at Lyons, I witnessed a strange act of humility in Madame de Roquemont—a humility which at that time I did not understand, but of which later I saw all the beauty and greatness.

M. de Roquemont, a Norman gentleman of high birth, had taken refuge in Lyons during the Revolution, and determining not to be dependent on others, had embarked in the agency of an Italian commercial house. His wife, who was related to a noble Italian family, named Dareste, encouraged him in this undertaking without any false shame; not in the interests of their children, for they had but one little girl, but to be able to live comfortably themselves, and, above all, to help the number of *émigrés*, who, like themselves, had lost their all in the Revolution. During this

time, a member of the Dareste family, a clever, calculating man, bethought himself of proposing a tax upon tobacco, and communicated his ideas to the Government. This tax, which was eventually to bring in so many millions, at first only produced a few centimes. The collection of this duty was vulgar and humiliating, from the contact it entailed with the consumer. Madame de Roquemont, through her relationship to the inventor, had obtained permission to collect this popular tax in her shop. Sitting behind the counter, I saw to my amazement this noble lady, with her distinguished air and manners, open her door to the poorest and lowest workmen of the town, called *canuts*; ask them, with the greatest civility, what quantity or quality of tobacco they required; open the different canisters, and weigh out each little parcel or pinch herself; receive the farthing or half-penny in payment, and seat herself again with as much dignity as if she were selling pearls or rich jewels in an Oriental bazaar. It struck me the more as, until then, I had always looked upon such employments as servile and unfit

for persons of gentle birth. But when I found out (as I did later) that Madame de Roquemont employed all the profits of this business in bringing up a number of little orphans, whom I saw daily well clothed and fed at her table, I understood the whole beauty of her self-sacrifice, and felt that I had before me the example of a woman as saintly as she was nobly born, and that what all the world despised, was in reality what did her the most honour. Her charity had overcome all feelings of human respect, and she went on with her business till her death. Even now her name is never mentioned in Lyons without tenderness and respect.

III.

She herself took my mother and me to the Croix Rousse. It was a terrible moment for me, and still more for my poor mother. The great house (which had been an old convent) where we stopped, was called the Pension '*Pupier*.' One heard a sort of buzz of voices even before entering the door. This door had a grating in the middle, through which

one looked into the courtyard. Dante's Gate of Hell would not have appeared to me more terrible. I felt the words which I did not then know: *Lasciate ogni speranza voi che entrate!* All my courage forsook me. The walls seemed to me those of a prison—the faces those of gaolers. I saw about two hundred boys in the playground which we crossed while following the porter to the reception-room; and they looked at me with a wicked or mocking expression of face, as much as to say, 'So much the better; here comes a new victim, who will be as miserable as ourselves.' The grand air of Madame de Roquemont and the graceful beauty of my mother, however, rather imposed upon five or six of the elder ones, who took off their caps, and respectfully ranged themselves on one side of the wall to let us pass, looking at me in the meanwhile with a sort of kind compassion. At last we arrived at the parlour of the establishment, as it was called. It was a very large, barely-furnished room, where the Misses Pupier received visitors, or the parents of the pupils. There were four people in this

room to whom the establishment belonged since the death of M. Pupier the founder. These four associates were Miss Pupier the eldest, a bony woman of thirty or forty, who was the housekeeper: she was neither pretty nor ugly, and looked neither good nor bad. One saw at a glance that the soup was her business, and economy her darling virtue. The next was a tall, ill-made woman, on the eve of her confinement, married to a M. Philippe, who was also one of the firm. The said M. Philippe, who was, virtually, the principal professor or head master of the school, was a clever, well-educated man, but violent in the extreme, and one who inspired nothing but fear and repugnance in the minds of his pupils, in spite of a soft outside manner which deceived no one. The fourth was a priest, named M. Croizier, a good and gentle old man, caring little for the interests of the house, but holding a class in which he was universally beloved. The establishment did not in any way give one the idea of a college, but simply of a house of business. Nor did anything remind one of the 'family' tone so

much vaunted in the prospectus, unless it were the baby which Madame Philippe was on the point of bringing forth to the world! After having talked for some time with these four important personages, when my mother had insisted greatly on indulgence and gentleness towards me on the part of my new masters, the moment of parting came. My mother burst into tears, and I did the same; till Madame de Roquemont gently drew her away; the heavy iron outside door was shut, and I was launched into the playground, very much as a condemned criminal is launched into eternity. I could not say a word, but sat on the base of one of the columns of the cloister which surrounded the court, and I continued gazing through my tears at the hill of St. Foy on the other bank of the Saône. Some of the students who were from Mâcon, and among the rest MM. de Veydel, the sons of a lawyer there, who had arrived a few days before, came up to try and comfort me. I clung to them in my sorrow—an unfortunate thing for them, as you will see.

IV.

I was placed in the lowest class of the school, but I did not stay there long, and very soon had distanced all my companions. The healthy country life I had led had strengthened my mind as much as my body. I was old for my age. I rose rapidly from class to class, and soon became one of the head boys. After some months of captivity, the longing to leave my prison made me push forward more and more in my studies. But I was always equally miserable: Milly, my mother, my father, my sisters, my dear nursery maid Janette, my friend Claude Chanut, my dogs whom I loved nearly as much as the people—all seemed to have an equal share in my longing dreams. All my hopes were in the future; the present was hateful to me. The violence of M. Philippe, who was continually punishing and beating pupils whom he chose to call refractory, filled me with disgust and hatred of the man. What a difference between him and the tender reproaches of my father, or the tears of my mother, if we had com-

mitted any boyish fault! I recollect I used to pass whole hours, during the playtime, looking sadly and wishfully at the beautiful hills of Beaujolais, and fancying what everyone was doing at home at such and such an hour. All my dreams were of Milly.

But one day brought my disgust at the whole thing to a climax. A young man of Mâcon, named Eugène Siraudin, three or four years older than I, proud, brave, strong, looking every one straight in the face and fearing no one, had committed some slight infraction of rule in the German class, and had refused to kneel and beg pardon publicly of the professor. M. Philippe was summoned, and we were called in to be spectators of the punishment about to be inflicted. M. Philippe going up to him ordered him to kneel and make his excuses to the good old German master, whom we all liked, though he had been the involuntary cause of this scene. Siraudin, rising from his bench, said he was innocent of the fault laid to his charge, and positively refused. M. Philippe insisted, and threatened to force him

to obey. The poor German, in despair, threw himself between them, declaring he was satisfied that it was a mistake. We all joined in the protest; but M. Philippe, roughly pushing aside the professor and unintentionally throwing him down on the slippery floor of the school room, seized Siraudin by the hair and flung him under the table at his feet. Siraudin was sixteen, and a capital wrestler. Furious at this unmerited act of violence, he rose instantly, red with passion, and flying at the throat of M. Philippe, threw him in his turn under the table, and seizing the great mass of fair hair which adorned the professor's head (for they wore wigs and pig-tails in those days) held him by main force down to the floor. M. Philippe, in struggling to free his head, left his wig in the hands of his adversary and a great white place in his bald head was exposed to the eyes of the whole school. Siraudin triumphantly holding up the wig, shook it in our faces with a fierce and ironical laugh. All the students who hated M. Philippe, rejoiced at his defeat, although none dared move or share in the struggle. The two enemies

exhausted with passion again held one another in a ferocious embrace, each trying to knock the head of the other against the flag-stones of the hall, when the poor old German professor, fearing the death of one or the other, threw himself with all the weight of his enormous body on the interlaced arms of both, and so contrived to separate them. No sooner had he regained his breath, than a terrible cry from M. Philippe summoned all the servants from the kitchen to the assistance of their master. Three or four cooks, armed, like the executioners of former days, with spits and frying pans and other cooking utensils, rushed to the rescue and endeavoured to secure our companion who fought like a lion. At last they overpowered him, and, at the voice of M. Philippe, threw him out into the street to the mercy of the elements. The house re-echoed with the cries of the women, who, of course, took the part of the brutal pedagogue against the courageous martyr, as we considered our friend; and the rest of the day was spent in looking after his wounds. As for myself, the impression left on my mind by

this barbarous scene (the blows, the cries, the struggles, the hair which flew about the room, amidst torn books and broken benches and tables) was such, that a horrible shudder came over me which changed my sadness into hatred, and I vowed that I would no longer remain in the house. However, in order to insure the success of my plan, I felt that I must hide my rage for the moment in my heart, and try and obtain some accomplices. From this moment I began to plot my escape. I said to myself: 'I will no longer stay in this shambles, which is more like a slaughter house than a school. I will go back to my mother and to Milly. I would rather be the companion of 'Turc' in his kennel (that was the watch-dog in the courtyard at home) than the favourite of this brute of a master.' Resolutions of this sort, once firmly taken, are catching. My indignation was soon shared by the Veydels, whom I have before mentioned as being natives of Mâcon, and sons of an old friend of my mother. I often walked with them, and we concocted together the best means of carrying out our plan of escape.

One day, soon after the struggle in which poor Siraudin had been well-nigh murdered by the head-master, they took us to a wood called *La Caille* to celebrate some feast or other. This wood was the great place of meeting for the silk-workers of both sexes in the neighbourhood of Lyons. Our boyish eyes were witnesses of plenty of scandals there; it was not, in fact, at all a fit place for any young persons to go to. In the midst of the wood was a long avenue, which was the scene of our games. What those games were, and how little humanity or delicacy was shown in their selection, may be judged of by the following description. We had been told this day that a new sport was prepared for us which would exercise our bodies and (of course) improve our hearts. A long string was stretched from tree to tree across the avenue. To this string a goose was fastened by the feet, its long neck and head hanging down, and its great wings palpitating with fright. We were each blindfolded and given a naked sword, and the one who succeeded in cutting off the unhappy bird's head was to have the prize.

He who only mutilated its wings, or legs, or neck, was to be content with a green crown. We were ordered to applaud this barbarous sport; but my disgust kept me silent. Brought up to love animals, and to think it a sin to give wanton pain to any living thing, I could find no words to express my loathing at this horrible amusement. One of the Veydels was chosen, armed with the sword, and had his eyes bandaged. I drew close to him and whispered in his ear, that he had only to strike hard in the direction of my voice, which would be close to M. Philippe, and that then probably *he* would receive the cut intended for the poor bird. It happened as I had expected. M. Philippe received a slashing blow; but, unfortunately, only his hat suffered, and a great cry arose from the students at the pretended awkwardness of Veydel. He was led back to the path and his eyes unbandaged, when he appeared very penitent for the mischance. But the horrible games continued until the poor goose was nothing but a bloody trunk still quivering on the cord.

I went up to the Veydels, and gave vent to

my fury. 'How frightful an education this monster is giving us!' I exclaimed. 'What would our parents think of such lessons and such examples? To torture a wretched bird in this way for no earthly reason but cruelty, and give it no chance of escape—can we doubt that if our families knew of it they would instantly remove us from such hideous influences?' I saw that my words had had their effect. 'Well,' I continued, 'don't let us hesitate any longer. It is of no use to write, for our letters are always read before they are sent. But let us go ourselves, and report to our parents the real state of things. If they blame us, we have the massacre of our friend Siraudin, thrown more dead than alive into the street, to plead as our justification.' 'That is quite true,' they replied. 'Now let us separate,' I continued, 'lest we should be observed. Let me choose the day and the hour. Get together whatever money you may have, and carry it always about with you in your pockets. Then watch me, and be ready at a moment's notice to follow me.'

We went back to the college with this un-

derstanding, and no one had overheard our conversation.

V.

Two days after, the opportunity presented itself. I was ready, so were the Veydels; and I had only to give the signal. It was play-time, and after breakfast. The boys were scattered in the rooms, in the corridors, and in the courtyard. Some were playing at ball, others at racket. The Veydels, at my signal, followed me into the hall, of which the iron-grated door opened into the street. 'Let us pretend to be playing at tennis,' I whispered to them, 'and when the ball shall have passed the door, which I will leave open as if by accident, rush out as if to rescue it; I will run after you as hard as I can towards the wood. If they see us, they will fancy that I am running to help you to catch the ball. Then we will go slower, and take the road which leads to Fontaine. There we will stop for dinner, and a little carriage will take us in two days to Mâcon.'

I opened the door accordingly, and the game began. There were only one or two fellows

in the corridor who were watching us play. I threw the ball into the street, the Veydels rushed after it as if to catch it ; I followed; and then we all three took to our heels and ran as hard as we could in the direction of the wood, only looking round from time to time to see if we were followed. Our *ruse* had been successful; no one had thought of us at all, or, if they did, it was to imagine the ball had spun further than we expected, and that we should return with it immediately.

VI.

At the bottom of the hill, we stopped to take breath and hold a council of war. 'So far so well,' I exclaimed to my companions. 'Now let us change our course, and endeavour effectually to cheat our pursuers.' We had one sure and faithful guide, which was the Saône, gliding like a bright blue ribbon between the two shores. We left the wood, therefore, and followed a path which led us up higher and higher on the left bank of the river, from whence we could see everything without being seen. We walked quickly but

in silence. After having marched for two hours, we found ourselves at the village of Fontaine, which supplies Lyons with flour. We began to feel very hungry, and so resolved to enter the little town; but fearing discovery if we stopped at an inn on the Lyons' side, we walked up the High Street till we found ourselves in a little clean café at the other end, where we ordered dinner and a carriage to take us on to Villefranche. A nice-looking servant girl showed us into a tidy little dining-room; and the smell from the kitchen, where a fine Bresse capon was roasting on the spit, warned us that we must either break the law of the Church or of nature, for it was a Friday. After a moment's hesitation nature gained the day, and we agreed to eat the chicken. We had heard our mothers, who were very pious, say that when travelling one might eat meat without scruple, provided one did not do it from contempt for the laws of the Church; so our consciences were at ease. Hardly had we sat down to eat, however, than we heard a great noise at the front door of the inn. The door opened,

and M. Philippe himself entered, wiping the perspiration off his forehead. Turning to the mistress of the house he merely said, 'That's right, put another cover here, and I will dine with these gentlemen.' Whilst speaking he threw a wicked and satisfied look at us, which you may imagine pretty well spoiled our appetites. However, our pride made us resolve not to appear ashamed or troubled. We pretended to laugh at our little adventure, and to eat our uncanonical dinner with apparent gaiety. Some bad jokes were made by M. Philippe himself on the capon, but we felt that the worst was to come.

The dinner being over, M. Philippe summoned a policeman, and made us march before him through the wood back to the college. We looked down certainly, but we maintained a calm and quiet countenance for fear of being taken for prisoners. In an hour or two we arrived at the door of *L'Enfance.* M. Philippe went in first, leaving us in the charge of the policeman, hoping to prepare a public humiliation for us. Accordingly we found all the students ranged in a double file to receive us, and

M. Philippe gave the signal for hissing. But no one responded. Not a sound was heard from any of the boys—only a suppressed look of pleasure and excitement; so that our entry had more the character of a triumph than anything else. M. Philippe, more furious than ever, placed us in separate prisons. My two companions were put in a low dark room on the ground-floor, where they only remained two days, having consented to ask pardon publicly, and so were forgiven. But as for me, who was looked upon justly as the most guilty, they knew they need not expect so prompt a repentance; so I was shut up in a little room under the leads, where I had, certainly, plenty of time to reflect on my fault. But though I was only twelve, the feelings of honour I had inherited from my father made the very idea of denying the facts utterly out of the question; and in reality I considered my punishment rather a glory than the reverse. I threw myself on the bed, for I was very tired; but I did not shed a tear. I thought to myself, 'I shall have plenty of time, at any rate, to plan a better way of escape.' Unfor-

tunately, for the moment, all means of doing so had been taken away from me. My door was fastened outside with a padlock. My food was brought to me daily, but with precaution. They had taken away my coats, so that it was utterly impossible for me to escape without detection. Everyday the more good-natured among the professors and the best disposed among the students, were sent to talk to me and try to make me repent. I was glad to see them, and was touched by their kindness; but they gained nothing. I was firmly resolved not to yield, or remain in that house. A whole month passed in this way. I studied, read, wrote, and dreamed; but my resolution was unalterable, and no power on earth could have moved me.

VII.

The vacation time approached. My family, who had been informed by M. Philippe of my transgression and its punishment, were in despair at my obstinacy. At last my mother arrived herself, and to her I told all. She took me away with her instantly to Milly, when I became the gentle, loving child I had

been before. It was then determined to find another school for me. To send me to the Jesuits' College at Belley had always been my mother's wish; she ended by gaining over my uncles and aunts to her views. My father yielded, and my mother took me towards the end of October to this, the place of her predilection. I was as happy and bright as if she were taking me to a fête. My deliverance had been accomplished.

The road from Mâcon to Belley, on the frontiers of Savoy, was the first really grand scenery I had ever seen. My mother, whose imagination was lively and impressionable, enjoyed it as much as I did. We spent three days and a half on the road. First, we passed through La Bresse, a beautiful pastoral country with rich meadows and glorious golden crops of wheat and maize and Indian corn. The road then led us by the river *Ain* (an Arabic word meaning 'water'), which at that time was crossed by a ferry-boat. MM. de Cordon, relations of my father, lived in a beautiful château on the banks of the stream. My father had given them notice of our arrival, and they

met us at the ferry with that grand old-fashioned courtesy of noblemen of the old school, the remembrance of which remains with me to this day. The next morning we traversed Dauphiny towards Ambérieux, the mountains being thickly covered with châteaux, parks, gardens, woods, and lakes, the proprietors of which, especially M. de Montchalin, became afterwards great friends of mine. The plain then got narrower and narrower, and became a valley, then a defile, then a narrow gorge between two high peaks. One wheel of the carriage rolled on one side of the mountain, and one on the other. A rushing, tumbling stream tore down from the mountains and came across the high road: picturesque bridges, which were often nothing but trunks of trees still green, were thrown here and there over the *Albarini*, which was the Roman name of the little river. Enormous rocks jutted out from the mountains above our heads, as if they would come down upon us and crush us ; the vines were planted in terraces up the sides of the hills; and here and there a picturesque cottage peeped out from among the fig and

olive trees, which were thickly planted on the sides of the ravines. We could not take our eyes off this exquisite scenery which seemed more beautiful at every turn of the road. By-and-by the gorge widened, the stream swelled, and the houses, more numerous but not less picturesque, formed themselves into a little village on both banks, called St. Rambert. There is no street. The only one, in fact, is the *Albarini*, over which little bridges are thrown at intervals, connecting the houses. A little inn, with fishing nets carpeting the walls, was built just over the stream, and the owners catch trout and crabs out of the windows and from the open staircase. We supped and slept there, lulled by the fresh, soft, rushing of the little stream below us. One or two manufactories broke the stillness by the noise of their hammers, and one or two mills by the 'tic-tac' of their wheels. It is one of the most picturesque spots in the world. The valley widened as we went on the next day. We found it out by the greater extent of sky over our heads. Beautiful trees shaded the road and fringed the base of the mountains as we

came suddenly in sight of Bugey. A sandy track on our left led up a ravine to the Gothic Castle of Châtillon, which is nothing now but a venerable ruin, of the yellowish-brown tint which painters love so well. Hawks of various kinds watched us from the tops of the mountain peaks. Our road now wound up a steep hill to the château of M. d'Angeville, an old officer in the Spanish service. He was the father of M. d'Angeville, a distinguished member of parliament since 1830, and of Mdlle. d'Angeville, who first among women accomplished the ascent of Mont Blanc. From hence the view is magnificent. The town of Belley, with its imposing spires and steeples, lies at your feet. A little further on, the strong castle of Pierre-Châtel stands out bleak and grey against the sky; while the blue Rhone winds through the distant plain, and foams on the strand of Dauphiny.

We met M. d'Angeville (the father) coming out of his castle on horseback and cantering towards the town. He stopped and bowed, seeing by my boyish face and the expression of my dear mother's, that she was evidently

taking her son to the college at Belley, which had already acquired a great reputation among all pious parents. Having ascertained his name, my mother at once handed to him a letter of introduction which she had from M. de Cordon. He read it, and his face, which had been kind before, became radiant. 'The Hotel *Chevalier* is the best in the town,' he exclaimed. 'I will go on and get everything ready for you;' and so saying he touched his beautiful Andalusian pony with his whip, and galloped off to announce our arrival.

We went slowly down the steep hill and entered the Faubourg de Belley. The first great building on the right was the Jesuit college, called that of the *Pères de la Foi.* A large courtyard, from whence issued a confused sound of merry voices, divided it from the high road. 'There are your future companions,' said my mother. 'To-morrow I shall introduce you to them.' At the angle of the college was the church, with a fine architectural façade. The door was open towards the street. The church was divided in two by a kind of raised platform, the upper part being

for the scholars and professors, the lower for the townspeople. My mother stopped the carriage and told me to come in with her for a few moments. I knelt by her side while she prayed with her whole heart. I saw the tears coming into her beautiful eyes as she prayed, and although her lips gave no sound I knew she was praying for me, and thanking God who had enabled her to bring me to such a safe home. She made me repeat a few little prayers too, though I was too confused to take in the sense of what I said. Then we got into the carriage again and soon arrived at the hotel which M. d'Angeville had told us of, and where he himself was at the door to receive us, and to show us into a very pretty and comfortable apartment. Madame de Chandor, his cousin, came directly after dinner to invite us to dine with them the next day; so that we already felt we had found friends. In the evening the Père Génisseau, who had been informed of our arrival, came to call upon my mother. He was very kind and very merry. His business was to manage all the temporalities of the college, see the parents of the students,

and in fact attend to all the external work. He was also steward of the house. He bought the bread, wine, meat, milk, and vegetables, and had the power of selecting and dismissing the servants and workmen. As there were upwards of 400 persons in the establishment the labour was immense. He was always on horseback, dressed half as a religious and half as a secular, with a black great coat, high boots, a riding whip, and a round hat. His character and face corresponded with his functions. Always civil, good-natured, gay, prepossessing, and cheery, he was a firstrate intermediary between the world and the convent. He understood and loved children, for whom he had always a kind word and a merry laugh. My mother was touched by his manner. It was agreed that I should enter the college the next day, and be presented to the superior, the Père Debrosse.

VIII.

The following morning accordingly I was duly installed. The Père Debrosse was a fine-looking man, and what is called 'very good company.' He was not clever, but governed

the house by his sound common sense. He was a perfect model of virtue, piety, and modesty. He received my mother with marked respect and attention, but asked very few questions about me. It struck me that my antecedents were of little interest to him, and that he trusted to the good set among whom I should be placed, to the rule and to the excellence of the professors, to bring me back into the right way even if I had strayed from it. The conversation was long but not at all severe. He then made us over to the Père Genisseau that we might see the house and garden in all their details. Everything was in perfect order. In the school-rooms we heard the murmur of voices repeating the lessons in class, the calm voice of the professor predominating from time to time. The dormitories were large and airy; the refectory beautifully clean and nice, without being luxurious; the courts were finely sanded; the gardens shady and well kept. A ménage, a *salle d'armes*, and a tennis court, were included among the means of exercise and amusement for the students. Nothing seemed to be too dear to answer this purpose.

Evidently profit was the last thing thought of in this establishment—only the moral and physical welfare of the boy. No one asked what a student brought in to the college, but what he became as he grew up. It was eminently a college for *souls*—this struck me at first sight. It was written on the faces not only of the professors but of the lay brothers, and of all whom I met about the house. It was impossible to conceive a greater contrast than between the tone of this college and that of Lyons. When I left the house with my mother I was already proud of my future masters and companions, and resolved to do my best.

I went back with my mother to the Hôtel Chevalier, and we went to dine with M. d'Angeville and Madame de Chandor. I do not know how it happened, but a chance word, which I heard pronounced by the ladies, and of which I did not even know the sense, made me feel that my reputation (such as it was) had preceded me. 'O!' exclaimed Madame de Chandor to my mother during dinner, 'the good fathers are enchanted at the gift you

have bestowed upon them in the person of your son, for they say he is a true *matador*.' This Spanish word, which signifies the feller of the monster in the bullfight, made me lift my head a little higher. 'They already look upon me as somebody,' I said to myself, when the word had been duly explained to me after dinner.

My mother stayed some days at the hotel to accustom me to our approaching separation, and to recommend me to the kindness of the best persons in the town. I went with her to see the Château de Pierre-Châtel, which was then a state prison, and which made a very painful impression upon me. We also made several expeditions to some of the most beautiful sites in the neighbourhood, and were more and more struck with the wild beauty of the country. Valleys, hills, rocks, precipices, foaming cataracts, flowing streams, as imposing as the Rhone, Gothic castles, Alpine mountains, such as Mont Colombier, whose snowy top is lost in an almost continual cloud — all this made a deep impression on a boy of my age and temperament, and seemed to open my

eyes to a new world. At the end of a few days I felt myself altogether another man.

So much for Belley and its neighbourhood. As to the college itself, it consisted of an immense court (the usual playground), out of which opened the school and class rooms. Crossing a large hall, you came to a fine flight of steps leading down into the gardens. All the windows of the building looked out on these beautiful alleys of fruit trees, and on the beds of vegetables and flowers, which were redolent of sweet smells and glorious colours. The rooms of the Fathers were on this side, and a perfect silence reigned over the whole. Above was the vast dormitory, where two rows of curtains separated our beds. Mine was in the angle of the room, so that I had a window to myself. When I pushed aside the curtain my eyes used to feast on the garden below and on the valley and mountains beyond. It was chance that placed me in this corner, but I thanked God for it as for a special favour. It was so pleasant at night to watch the moon rising above the poplars, and throwing bright lines of light on the valley; or else to see

the sunrise gilding the mountain tops. I used to fancy myself at Milly.

IX.

Beyond the kitchen-garden was a long covered avenue, which was reserved for the fathers and professors. We always saw one or two, in their long black coats, with a book in their hands, either saying their office, if they were priests, or preparing our classical lessons. They used to appear to me like the shades in the Elysian fields. The very sight of them seemed to inspire us with piety and recollection. This shady avenue led into some beautiful sunny meadows, bordered with poplars with their long stems, which the wind bowed and raised again, with a low sighing sound through the silvery branches. Beyond these meadows rose the high dark rocks I have before mentioned, with their tiny cascades and waterfalls. We were not near enough to hear the noise, but we saw the white foam rushing over the stones. To the right, a hill, richly cultivated with alternate crops of wheat and barley and trellised vines, planted in a succes-

sion of terraces up to the summit, added to the luxuriant beauty of the view. From time time the stillness was broken by the creaking of the heavy cart-wheels, or the lowing of the bullocks under the goads of the children of the farm.

X.

To the left, one of the largest wings of the building was devoted to a succession of class-rooms. There each of the two or three hundred students had his place, his bench, and his desk. There, under the superintendence of a silent master, seated on a high chair, we worked until the hours of divine service. The church was at the side. We went down into it by a back staircase. All the offices were well and reverently performed. The music was conducted entirely by the students, and was excellent; the voices were good and harmonious; and the quiet recollection of the priests and choir-boys, the devotion of the people, the lights, the incense, and all the pomps of the service, produced a very marked effect on us all. I never saw any scandal, or even the slightest irreverence. An angel

seemed to guard the House of God. That was the key-note of the Fathers' teaching. The conscience of their pupils there found a sanctuary. On Sundays and Feast-days the very air we breathed seemed supernatural. Everyone had a peculiar expression, and we came out of church sanctified and happy.

XI.

No one in this house felt that terrible coldness which is generally met with in great establishments of this sort, where everyone, proud of what he has himself suffered in leaving his home, wishes to revenge himself on the new comer. On the contrary, I saw nothing around me but kind and sympathising faces. One or other of the boys came up to me to say a few cheery words, to show me the ways of the house, or to do me some little service. I felt friendship and kindness everywhere. Nothing bitter marred the beginning of my new life; on the contrary, I felt I was only entering a new family, where I should soon be quite at home. Even my tears were not without some sweetness. This atmosphere

made me good from the very first day. Some of the Fathers, on whom the gentleness and grace of my mother had made a great impression, fancied they saw a likeness in my features to hers, spoke to me tenderly, and said they augured well from my face. This inclined me to like them too. When my mother at last was obliged to go home, I was already accustomed to my new position. It was a sad moment; but I was not now, as at Lyons, without hope. I seem, even at this moment, to see her carriage toiling up the steep hill on the road which led back to Mâcon, by the gorges of St. Rambert, as I watched her white handkerchief, which she was waving from the window to wish me a last good-bye. All that day I was sad; but my companions did not laugh at me, or intrude on my sorrow.

XII.

The next day I had already found friends. I chose them by their faces, an instinct which has rarely deceived me. The first were Italians from Turin, Alessandria, and Asti—Sambuy, Alfieri, Ghilini. They were all three

of noble family in their own country. The neighbourhood of Piedmont, the political sympathies of their parents, and the wealth of their families, had made them choose this Jesuit college in preference to any other. All the religious traditions of their nation flourished here. Alfieri, a tall and handsome youth, like his uncle the poet, was son of the marquis of that name, who was attached to the royal household of Savoy, and afterwards became ambassador (after the Restoration) to the Bourbons. He transmitted to the good *Pères de la Foi* the necessary sums for their luxurious establishment in France. Alfieri, with whom I have always maintained the same intimate relations, became president of the Piedmontese senate during the late revolution. He owed his influence no less to his ability than to his high character. Sambuy, springing from a military race, followed the same career under Buonaparte, and greatly distinguished himself. As for Ghilini, his destiny was written on his face, which was the sweetest and most pleasing one possible. It was impossible not to fall in love with him at first sight.

His mother and sisters could not have had bluer eyes, or a whiter and more transparent skin than his, or a more modest and grave expression of countenance. He was chosen as page to the Neapolitan Cleopatra—the beautiful Princess Borghese, at Turin. I do not know when he was called home by the Great Reaper; but he was the choicest flower ever culled on the slopes of the French Alps. A good many young men of Brescia, Bergamo, Bologna, Florence, and even Rome, joined their set. The college, in fact, was cosmopolitan.

XIII.

At the end of a few days my choice was made, and my first friendships became irrevocable. Boys choose, as I have said before, by instinct, which is as rapid as the eye or the ear. The Fathers tried me in one class after the other, to ascertain my mental capacity. One day I was higher, and one lower, in my work. It was difficult to know how to place me. In some things I was far above my age; in others a very child, and my inattention often discouraged my masters. At last I was

put in the third or middle class, a sort of half-way position, in which one could be a child in the study of language and a man of taste in poetry and rhetoric.

One of the Fathers soon attracted me to himself. He was a man of good family, who was a priest in dress and in piety, but in other ways a man of the world; his name was the Père Béquet. I have never known his origin; but his high birth revealed itself in his delicate features, beautiful hands, aristocratic manners, keen and yet gentle look, and sweet voice, which made him loved and preferred to all the rest. He was not a bit of a pedant. His tone in class for young and old was that of a father of a family teaching his own children. He would joke even when pointing out a fault, and none of us ever saw him out of temper. His corrections, when necessary, were those of a mother. If they had cost us humiliation or tears, I believe he would have blushed and cried himself. The hour of his class was a real delight to us all. We did our work, but he always contrived to make it interesting, and often amusing. He often made us laugh, but

we did so quietly, not to wound his high-bred sensitiveness and good taste by our roughness or rudeness. Everyone in the class of the Père Béquet seemed insensibly to take their tone from him. His piety was attractive even to the most careless of us. When it was his turn to say mass, he said it with a tender recollection and devotion which was more edifying to us than half-a-dozen sermons. We seemed to feel as he felt, and his face was our best lesson. When the religious office was over, he resumed his bright playful manner with us directly the solemn shadow of God had left his face, and he was only all the more ready to enter into our feelings and amusements; so that it was impossible to associate anything gloomy with his religion. He loved God with all his heart, but as a tender Father and Brother and Spouse, and he made us do the same. In playtime, or in the garden, or in our walks, he would pick out the best of his pupils, and talk to them familiarly and intimately on all sorts of subjects; so that he became our great friend as well as our master, and one to whom we were not afraid to open

our whole hearts. He thus formed and moulded us to his will, and communicated to his class a delicacy of feeling, a sense of honour, and a refinement of taste, which made us feel like a kind of confraternity. I need not say that I at once attached myself to this man with all the enthusiasm of my nature. In the Père Béquet was centred, in fact, the whole teaching of the college. As he became the vice-principal, and thus followed us in our studies up to the higher classes of rhetoric and philosophy, we had no other master for three years; and the fruits of his teaching were shown in what I might call the graces showered on this portion of our lives. He would have been a perfect Fénélon for the education of a prince; he remained by chance, or rather, as we felt, by the providence of God, a Fénélon to a mountain college. When the order was suppressed in France, Fouché fancying that the Jesuits were dangerous to the empire, his superiors recalled him to Belgium. No minister was ever more mistaken. So far from inspiring us with a spirit of hostility or opposition to the government, or with a taste

for republicanism, their lessons and example tended only to give us a stronger love for monarchy, religion, and the empire.. Buonaparte was deceived by his police minister. His uncle, Cardinal Fesch, was preparing for him good and loyal subjects—Fouché, soldiers and Saïds. Fouché, unhappily, gained the day!

XIV.

The professor of physics and mathematics was a man who had joined the society from piety, and in gentleness and goodness resembled our dear Père Béquet. His name was Dumouchel. He had enough intelligence to see one thing through nature and science—and that was God. But he saw Him without a shadow of superstition, as the cause is judged by the effect. Mathematics were his forte; he never disputed—he proved all that he asserted. He was not a priest.

Another of the Fathers, a young Belgian named Father Wrintz, was a great lover of Mirabeau. He was a man full of feminine and tender illusions. We liked, but rather pitied him. He always seemed to us a child,

and so he remained all his life. Years after he wrote to me from Anvers, at the time of the declaration of the Republic, reproaching me for not giving it a sufficiently religious character, and yet acknowledging that I had given back to the Church the only things I could at that time obtain from the French people—i.e. respect and liberty. I heard soon after that he had been translated to the kingdom of the innocent and the pure in heart, and there, I feel sure, we shall find him a child still.

There was another professor, whom I have not yet described, but a man of a totally different stamp. He was called the Père Varlet, and was of the stuff of which the old monks were made. He was very well-informed and clever, but austere and silent—his life was one long meditation. He had been appointed not only to the chair of rhetoric, for which he was quite unfit, but to be the habitual confessor of the students—an unfortunate selection. He acquitted himself scrupulously and severely of this duty; but his conscience was as fearful as our own. He was certainly a good man, but

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too silent and reserved to win our confidence. I recollect one spring when I had been ill, the doctors ordered me to take long walks in the neighbouring woods. Father Varlet was one day told to take me with him on an expedition he was to make, for some reason or other, in the mountains. As he walked along, he said his office or prepared the lessons for his class, but never spoke a word. It was in the month of May; the country was exquisite with the breath of flowers which scented the whole air; the ground seemed a perfect mosaic of colour. I loitered behind the Father, gathering these floral treasures till my hands could hold no more, and came back loaded to the college. The rushing mountain streams had sprinkled them with water, which looked like dew, and I was in the seventh heaven of delight! The Father did not deign even to look at them. To one of his ascetic temperament, my enjoyment of these minute beauties of Creation was almost a crime. Not one word of admiration could I extort from him on the subject of my floral treasures —unless they had been consecrated on the

altar at Mass or at Benediction, they were to him but worthless weeds. We used to return very late to the college, after three or four hours of solitary walking, during which time we had not exchanged a single word.

This went on for two months. At the end of that time I was cured, but very much bored. The spring time of this holy man had no flowers but in his psalms.

XV.

There was another Father, who certainly was not made to live in community, or with children of gentle breeding. He had been given the philosophy class, as if to disgust us with it more completely. He was certainly a good man, but the most disagreeable person possible. He had been taken from some village or other, where he had been accustomed to teach reading to the peasants, although, in reality, a greater boor than themselves. His face was most repulsive; his red hair stood on end above his forehead; he squinted with both eyes. His mouth, which never smiled, had a bitter sardonic grin, as if

he rejoiced in humbling and annoying those under his authority. He never spoke to us but with sharpness and ill-nature. We detested him, one and all, especially when we compared him with his colleague, another professor, who had been an officer in the Republican army. This man was gentle, simple, and well-informed. He had been converted by I know not what miracle, which he never ceased to describe to us as a proof of the divine intervention, and as a reward of faith. He was very much loved, in spite of his *naïveté*—for this *naïveté* was honest and sincere. A child respects even error if told with good faith.

Another professor, the Abbé Letourneur, was the son of an orange-seller in the Rue de Sèvres at Paris, and had all the wit and cleverness which seems to be inborn in Parisians of that class. He had been educated by some charitable Fathers in a seminary of the faubourg. His quickness and intelligence soon brought him into notice. He had taken the Ultramontane line in his quarter, and was full of zeal. The Jesuits remarked and coveted him. He joined them with ardour

and joy, and did not fail not only to please but to electrify them. He could do everything he chose; and had more wit than was needed to fascinate a whole world of pedants. We always pitied those who had to answer him. He was universally considered a second Voltaire, only with double the power of the first. In fact, he was a youth of immense promise, and likely to do credit to any employment in which he should embark. But although deeply religious, he was a man. He was accused of some little act of indiscretion. Perhaps it was only a calumny. Whatever it was, it was not forgiven—he was sent away, although quietly. He left the order, but remained pious and good, and finally became a bishop. He lived a stainless life in his new capacity, and died pure. I never met a more amiable man. That was not enough, however, for the *Pères de la Foi.* For the slightest shadow of light conduct there was no remission!

XVI.

The religious inflexibility of the order was personified in Father Debrosse, the superior.

He was not a man of great ability, but of solid virtue. He had a fund of strong common sense, and that, after all, is the main quality for government. He guided all this little world without violence and without partiality. Everyone felt sure of his justice. His gentle, calm, grave face revealed his character. A change of directors would have brought about a revolution in the house. Everything was in perfect order, and peace was maintained with a sufficient amount of liberty. It has been said (though I never found it out) that this apparently perfect *régime* had one great defect—a secret police—which meant a system of *espionage*. The Fathers, who were charged with the maintenance of high principles and pure morals in the students, were supposed to employ some among them in that capacity, though secretly. This was possible, and we sometimes suspected it. We despised those who were suspected of this service, which was looked upon as the height of meanness; but it was winked at, as being useful to the majority. It took the character of the police in society, which we hate, but make use of. After all, I

never had any proofs of the existence of this system, and perhaps my suspicions had no real ground. Whatever it might have been, it was in the interests of conscience and public morality, and not for any personal advantage. One might deplore its use, but not altogether condemn it; it was, as it were, the eye of the master.

XVII.

Although our superiors endeavoured as far as they could without injuring private friendships, to avoid dangerous intimacies and secret conversations, although they preferred in our walks and games the number *three* to the number *two*—because three is always innocent and two is sometimes suspicious—we soon began to single out one or two amongst our companions and form little groups of intimate friends out of this great and mixed society. My first acquaintances were chosen from their age or place in the class next to me, but very soon I selected two with whom my sympathies and tastes were most in unison. The first of these was Aymon de Virieu. He was the son of the

Marquis de Virieu, a member of the constituent assembly; inclined to be a revolutionist in 1789, but a counter-revolutionist in 1790. Then, in 1792, he commanded the Royalist cavalry at the siege of Lyons, and disappeared in the retreat without anybody being able to discover his body. He was evidently a warm-hearted, brave man, full of talent and courage, but of an excitable temperament, which, in the state of parties in France at that time, led him one day into one extreme, and one day into another. He was at one time closely connected with Mirabeau, then with the Court, but especially with Mounier and Lally-Tollendal, who sent in their resignation after the 6th October, and who contented themselves with writing against the Revolution without fighting against it. The Marquis de Virieu at first took refuge in one of his estates in Dauphiny, but when the Royalist troops besieged Lyons he could not resist joining them, and was killed in the struggle. It is difficult to do him full justice, his antecedents being ultra-revolutionary, while his later life was just the

reverse. But he was always a deeply religious man, and had a strong feeling for the maintenance of the aristocracy. His dream of reform was, in fact, confined to the nobility, and he had not calculated on its ultimate consequences. His opinions may be judged of by those of his son.

Virieu had two sisters, one married to M. de Quinsonnas, a most amiable person and the mother of several children, who are now rich and well known in Paris. The other was Madlle. Stéphanie de Virieu, a charmingly pretty, clever girl, who never would marry that she might not leave her mother. She had a wonderful talent for painting, and her pictures seemed to grow under her hand as rapidly and eloquently as her speech. Her sketches were admirable and life-like; once taken by her you became immortal. Her talents were only equalled by her goodness. She lives now alone and solitary, in a château of her mother's in Gascony.

As to Virieu himself, the idol of his mother and sisters, he then lived in the

province of Dauphiny on a property called *Grand-Lemps*, which had been the favourite residence of his father. He was about fifteen when I first knew him, and consequently a year or two older than I was. His features were not beautiful but very remarkable. His forehead had those bumps which phrenologists look upon as indicating certain great qualities. His fair hair, which curled over his forehead, gave him the look of an old Roman bust. But the wonderful part of his face were his eyes, which no one could look at without being startled. It seemed as if wit and genius poured out of them as from an inexhaustible source. His nose did not correspond with the rest of his face; the nostrils were too open, and gave him an ironical expression. But his fine and delicate mouth, with its short and arched upper lip, redeemed what was wanting elsewhere, and gave, like the eyes, a character of wonderful distinction to his whole countenance. His character was as varied as his features. He was an enigma to most people, but that made him all the more interesting. He was a mixture of

Rabelais and Socrates. What was on the side of Rabelais as a child, amused and yet made one anxious for him. What was on the side of Socrates attracted one irresistibly. He always appeared to me in this light, and if I was repelled in one way I adored him in the other. For the same reason people said of him 'that he had sugar and salt on his lips,' but nevertheless I failed in separating myself from him, and we became fast friends.

As for me, it was evident that I made a different impression upon him, and that I helped to modify his nature in the right direction, and to bring him back to the religious teaching of his youth, more, perhaps, than approved itself to his reason.

But he died thus, and I thanked God for it. His strong sense of right had sufficed to bring him back to his childhood's God. But at the time of which I am now speaking, he was still halting between two opinions, and that annoyed me. All arguments with him ended in a joke, whereas I could never bear to laugh on serious subjects. My

mother had taught me not even to laugh at myself, but to realise that I was the work of God's hands, and, therefore, responsible to Him in all things. My face became grave and displeased when Virieu adopted a mocking, doubting tone in speaking of religion. This annoyance on my part, which I took no pains to conceal, influenced him, though insensibly. He was at first puzzled, not seeing how he had saddened one whom he heartily loved. Afterwards he understood me, and corrected himself as much as his nature would allow.

XVIII.

The other friend I chose was a young man of Chambery, Louis de Vignet, a nephew of the Comte de Maistre. I did not then even know the name of a family with whom I have since been so closely connected. Louis was my first acquaintance amongst them, and he also was older than myself. We were not the least alike in character, but our minds had a great deal in common. It was in this way that we came to sympathise so much with one another. He was inclined to be sad and

reserved. I was bright, open and communicative. Although he was not yet arrived at the age when the passions develope themselves, he had the silence and expression of a man already overwhelmed with suffering of this kind. His face was like that of Werther; his pale high forehead, and the black clustering hair which shaded it, gave him the look of an Italian; his eyebrows were strongly marked, and added to the depth and sadness of his eyes. His closed lips seemed to be afraid of compromising him by any light or careless speech. His figure was tall and slight. He was thoughtful and grave, and his head, which he naturally held down, showed the working of a mind far in advance of his age. No one could see him without remembering him. He made at once on me the same strong impression which he did on everyone else. At first, I looked upon him with the respect of an inferior to one infinitely above me in everything. I tried to understand him, but I did not dare speak to him. He, on the contrary, sought me; and his conversation interested me the very first

day more than that of anyone I had ever heard. His mind, in fact, had a power and an originality which far surpassed his masters. He seemed sometimes to despise them. But when in composition, or in an examination, he was anxious to justify our high opinion of him, he used to come out like thunder from a cloud and surpassed everyone. It was, in fact, almost impossible to come up to him. I was, in one sense, his rival; but I was ashamed of being compared with him. His superiority seemed to me to be so incontestable, he was so richly gifted in all ways, that I accepted my inferiority without envy and without pain. He was already great in everything, whereas I was only growing.

In the first school in which he had begun his studies, he had acquired certain advanced ideas and thoughts which were very unlike those of a boy. In religion especially, he was a free thinker. At a time when we, children, had hardly begun to think at all, he considered himself an Atheist, though he did not dare to own it. I found that on this account his influence was dreaded and himself

suspected by the masters. It is curious that my first ideas of incredulity should have come, as a boy, from one of this very family of Le Maistre, from whom afterwards were to emanate my strongest religious impressions. This proves how the thoughts of one single family, multiplied by five or six clever men, become a power in the world. Louis de Vignet was often out of humour—this sometimes affected our intimacy—yet I never was myself out of temper at that time. When he came out of what we used to call his 'black fits,' he found me just as he had left me. But take him all in all, he was certainly the greatest man I ever came across during my college life. He changed afterwards, and in some ways for the better, and died Ambassador at Naples.

XIX.

I have now described the two natures to whom chance or instinct had linked me at a period when intimacies often decide one's future character: Virieu, the type of the aristocracy, and Vignet, of genius. But there

was one more who has recently died, Guichard de Bienassis, who was a complete contrast to the other two.

He was the only son of a good and amiable widow called Madame de Montlevon. M. de Montlevon was a man of a certain age, who had married, late in life, a woman of inferior rank. She had borne him this one son, and he had left her all his fortune, which consisted of a little château called Bienassis, situated in Dauphiny, at about half a league from the town of Crémieu. This house, which later became our head-quarters, was built on a solitary hill, flanked by two towers and backed by a beautiful wood. A pretty stream shaded by weeping willows ran through the garden. By-and-bye I shall describe its inmates.

Bienassis, who bore the name of his castle, was then half noble by his father, and half of the middle class through his mother, but he decidedly preferred the latter. He was a thorough child of Nature. He had found a little room in the castle which his father had converted into a library. This

room was kept locked by Madame de Montlevon, but the key was hung in her bedroom. A young girl of fifteen, who was half-maid, half-companion, to Madame de Montlevon, was very fond of Bienassis, and at his request used to bring him very often this fatal key. He used to go by stealth into the library and carry off a provision of books, which he hid under his mattress. It need not be added that he chose those which were the most attractive, and yet the most dangerous at his age. The 'Confessions' of J. J. Rousseau, so enticing at fourteen; Helvétius, so tiresome but so calculated to destroy all faith in a child's mind; Raynal, that bloated philosopher, who mistook declamation for elegance and affectation for feeling; Faublas' *Liaisons dangereuses*, and other novels of the same kind, where vice parodied virtue, and riotous liberty, love. These, and works like these, had done their best to deprave this good and simple nature. He had become thoroughly imbued with these false sentiments and this mock wisdom. But when the true chord had been struck by J. J. Rousseau, his enthusiasm

reached its height, and his admiration became a worship. The different passages which he knew by heart, and which he repeated to us with delight, used to enchant us. We would have given all we possessed for the key of the little sanctuary into which he had dived to such good purpose. Thus our group was composed of Virieu, the sceptic; Vignet, the incredulous; I, pious by instinct, but ignorant; and Bienassis, whose susceptibilities had been excited by these readings to an alarming extent. It was evident that some strong element was needed to direct four minds in such a state of doubt and ferment. This element was found, and I will tell you how.

XX.

One lovely spring day when all the country was radiant with flowers and sweet smells, and when the windows of our class-room, opening on the garden, let in great puffs of soft air, redolent of honeysuckle, and roses, and pinks, and verbena, our professor suddenly stopped in his thorny translation of Ovid, shut up his Latin dictionary, and taking up a book

in a stitched cover which lay on the table beside him, he said softly to us—

'Now, young gentlemen, I give you a holiday, and entire liberty to all of you who wish to enjoy this beautiful day. You may go into the garden, or the courts, or amuse yourselves as you please. Your time is your own. But for you who are older, and who perhaps find greater pleasure in books than in games, I am going to ask your permission to read to you some pages of a new book, which I have just received from Paris. I propose to make this my lesson to-day. The author's name is M. de Châteaubriand. He is just come, not from a polytechnic, or normal or military school, but from the virgin forests of America. He had been sent there as one of a regiment of Vendeans, a battalion of emigrants, in fact, of the army of the Great Condé. He had escaped from a grotto filled with old Christian missionaries, with the Père Charlot and the Virgin Atala, who spoke a divine dialect borrowed from the black swans of Meschacébé. His masters of rhetoric were the thunder and the lightning, the clouds

and the celestial phenomena, the great silence of the desert and the voice of Nature, the sighing of the winds and the rustling of the leaves. You will see how in all this he learnt to hear the voice of God; and how he learnt likewise to speak to men of Him. Listen or not, as you please. The waters and the woods will be silent, and the celestial spirits will give ear, for it is their Creator who speaks. Try only to understand the nobility of his language.' This preamble struck us all immensely. We listened with all our ears. The good Father struck his hand on his book, and began with these words:—

'There is one God. The fool alone hath said in his heart "There is no God."' The simple grandeur of the ideas and the simplicity of the words laid hold of our imaginations, the solemn voice of the Father, the tears which seemed to be swelling up in his throat and trembling in his tone, the novelty of the style and the holiness of the author's dreams, completely captivated our imaginations. We heard for the first time what we had never realised before, the beauty of truth, the sentiment of greatness, the workings of the heart in the

harmony of language—there was no need to tell us to keep silence! There was a stillness in the class-room which made itself felt—so afraid were we of losing a single sentence of this wonderful book which spoke to us of the unknown. There was a mystery too about the whole which added force to his words. The grace of the composition was equal to its power. The woman in the tale had something about her of the angel. Atala was the divinity of the forests, and our hearts worshipped without understanding her. We should have liked the book never to come to an end; but the Father, though as delighted as ourselves, would only give us a little at a time. The end of the class coming only too soon, we rushed upon the professor imploring him to read just a few more pages; but he was inexorable, and we had to go out with all the unsatisfied longing which that wonderful volume had awakened in us. We talked of nothing else, and the promise to read us some more if we were diligent was the most infallible encouragement to work which our professors could have suggested. I was certainly the most touched, because the three notes of my exist-

ence, religion, melancholy, and family love, were likewise the key to Châteaubriand's divine genius. However though this book had excited my admiration in the highest degree, I still fancied that some parts of it were in false taste. The next day, having accompanied my companions to the park of a beautiful country-house where we often went, belonging to a Colonel Maupetit, and the conversation having fallen on the *Génie du Christianisme*, they asked me, 'Well; what do you think of it?' 'I,' I replied, 'I am enchanted, but not convinced.' 'And why not?' retorted a young man from Grenoble, who was afterwards drowned when bathing in the Isère. 'Because it lacks, according to me, the principal element of perfect beauty, which is *nature*; it is beautiful, but it is too beautiful!'

These words pleased my audience, who thought them just; and in fact, I could not find any better explanation of my feelings about this book even now. What is sought for is not always found.

I passed a first-rate examination and ob-

tained a quantity of prizes towards the end of the year. Vignet shared them with me. My mother had come to assist in the distribution, and be present at the solemnity. We acted a little play. Vignet and I had the first parts, and were loudly cheered. I have never forgotten the enthusiasm of an old military man, who had come to see one of his nephews. 'Ah,' he exclaimed, on hearing a speech which I had composed for the occasion, 'there is one who will make a famous general!' All human glory in his eyes was summed up in a bayonet. I returned home in triumph. The carriage could not hold all my (already faded) wreaths and my prize books, which, fortunately, were more lasting treasures. Milly soon made me forget all these follies. I found there Charles Chanut, my old friend, and Janette, my faithful love, and the simple tastes of my childhood resumed their full sway.

Bienassis made his mother write to mine for leave to come and spend a few days with him at his château in the neighbourhood of Crémieu. Virieu was to join us from his home at Grand-Lemps. I obtained the desired permission and

started joyfully. I never shall forget the day that I arrived at Bienassis, where my two friends had preceded me. No sooner did they see me from the tower of the castle, than they fired a *feu de joie* and waved flags and handkerchiefs from every window. I hurried my driver, and was soon in the arms of my friends. Madame de Montlevon received me like a mother. One saw that her boy was her idol, and certainly he was master of the house, A pretty, bright young person, half-maid, half-companion, of whom Bienassis had often spoken to me at Belley, welcomed us with the rest, but a little shyly, and with a side look at her protectress. We were very soon initiated into all the corners of the house, the orchard, the gardens, the fountains, and even the forest. We came back to dine at the castle, where every delicacy of the season awaited us. Madame de Montlevon pressed us to eat of everything, and the pretty little servant was assiduous in her attentions, especially to her young master, for whom she picked out the choicest morsels. After dinner we went upstairs and Bienassis brought us the fatal key,

which a too good-natured person had lent him; we followed him in silence to the library, and there found ourselves in what appeared to us a paradise of thought. Each one chose the book most suited to his taste; I pounced upon the 'Confessions of J. J. Rousseau,' so full of beauty and of villainy. We plunged in silence into that sea of troubled waters, not knowing whether to be most shocked or astonished at what the head had dared to conceive, and what the pen had had the equal courage to record. We each of us carried off our favourite volume in our pockets to read at our leisure in our own rooms, or in the shade of the woods. We had gone in to this fatal room innocent as children; we came out of it with the guilt of men. A turn of a key had given up to us the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The two fruits were in our hands, it was for us to choose. We still had a sense of right; but we needed an experienced eye to make a selection for us out of such dangerous materials, in which curiosity and pleasure were our only guides. We had, it is true, a feeling of remorse at eating this for-

bidden fruit, but this remorse vanished in presence of the new passion which this kind of miscellaneous reading had developed in us. We were like bathers, who, at the first plunge into the sea, feel a kind of shiver at the waves, and then realise only the voluptuous freedom of the element. With these feelings we left the hidden library of Bienassis, where every species of corruption had been thus unconsciously revealed to us.

In the evening, after supper, Bienassis took us to a rich Lyons merchant, who had bought a pretty country-house at some little distance from the castle, where he lived with his wife and two daughters, pretty girls of fifteen or sixteen, to whom he presented us. We found them charming and as *naive* as ourselves, and we hoped to see a good deal of them. But with the bad taste of our age, we could not resist amusing ourselves at the expense of their father; and our ill-timed mockery, although done from pure thoughtlessness and childishness, wounded his self-love and he closed his gates to us for the future. He did quite right. Our aristocratic vanity was justly

punished by the simple dignity of the manufacturer. We felt it ourselves; but it was too late, and we had to give up all hope of seeing again the fair Lyonnaise beauties. It was our first lesson, and a very wholesome one.

XXI.

'During our holiday,' we exclaimed the next day, 'let us go and see the lions of Dauphiny.' No sooner said than done. We started at once for the grotto *de la Balme*, a wonderful cavern by which one penetrates into the very bowels of the earth. It was like the caverns so often described by the poets, and of which we had been surfeited at college. Sombre lakes, where the water dripped from the dark roof in solemn drops: weird-like boats to cross the subterranean stream: beautiful stalactites glistening in the torchlight: gloomy, low muddy passages, through which one glided in the dark, to emerge into fresh lakes and fresh stalactites, until their sameness wearied you and you longed to come back to the light of day. I confess I had enough of it. It disgusted me with grottoes for ever, and

I have always preferred God's sunshine to the dark half light of the frogs. We made up our minds the next day to visit the Grande Chartreuse with the valleys of Graisivaudan and Grenoble. Madame de Montlevon good-naturedly lent us her horses and carriage.

The following evening accordingly, escorted by an old servant of the family, we started singing in chorus the romances of our respective families, which echoed joyously through the Dauphiny hills. We were half wild with youth and joy and a sense of perfect freedom which was so new to us. Wherever we stopped at the wayside inns we communicated our gay-heartedness to everyone around us. In this way we visited Voreppe, Voiron, and finally Grenoble, going from one state of enchantment to the other. Bienassis had a celebrated cousin at Grenoble called M. Comte, who received us with open arms. His charming wife and children vied with one another in contributing to our amusement. We dined with them every day, whilst we lodged at a little inn which has since become famous; Buonaparte having

lodged there on his first return from Elba. Grenoble seemed to us as the first chain of the Alps. The rocks and rushing waters of the Isère, the valley of Graisivaudan, the forests of pines, the snow which covered the tops of the mountains, the fortresses which here and there bristled on the hill tops, all made a great impression upon us, and rather diminished our childish gaiety. When nature shows herself in her severe aspect, it unconsciously saddens us. Admiration is not always gay, but grave. I felt this then for the first time.

XXII.

After passing some days at Grenoble, we returned to Bienassis by the Lyons road. We were welcomed back as if we had been the sons of the house. The fatal key of the library was again lent by our accomplice. We found it simpler to leave the door open and hang the key as usual in Madame de Montlevon's bedroom. Her age and infirmities prevented her going upstairs, so that we thus escaped her maternal vigilance. We read everything that we ought not to have read.

Our life was perfectly delicious, and we prolonged our stay till nearly the end of the holidays. On our way back we stopped a day or two at Grand-Lemps, the austere house of Madame de Virieu and her daughter. It was a convent in a house of exiles. We respected its silence and shared in its prayers. It was like a home of the early Christians. Mademoiselle Stéphanie de Virieu, by her grace and beauty, no less than by her great talents, reminded one of those holy Virgins who sanctified the homes of the first martyrs in the time of the Roman persecutions. She was like a flower on a tomb, whose sweetness embalmed the air around her, and softened the sad recollections of her pious mother. This ascetic life made us ashamed of the bad books we had been devouring at Bienassis. Thus the world appeared to us under two contrary aspects. On the one hand, the giddiness of passion and scepticism in Madame de Montlevon's library; on the other, sorrow, piety and mourning in the drawing-room of Grand-Lemps. These were the two distinct impressions which remained on my mind after my return home.

XXIII.

I returned troubled but not altogether perverted to Milly. The genial piety of my family did not fail to bring me to repentance. The *Pères de la Foi* made me forget the library in Dauphiny. The first days of November I found myself again at Belley. This was a year of good and holy impressions. My imagination, touched by the example of my mother, and by the holy lives of the Fathers around me, took a complete turn. I realised, for the first time, the delights of religion, and might easily have been led on to positive fanaticism. If I were to live a thousand years I should never forget those days of conscientious study, those hours of fervent prayer, and those nights spent very often altogether in meditation; or the delight which I felt in the consciousness that I was accomplishing all my duties as in the sight and in the very presence of God. Yet I lost nothing of my usual gaiety. On the contrary, no one can tell with what delight, that winter, I skated over the marshy

flooded meadows, in the midst of ice and snow, flying rather than skating, through the clear frosty air: or how in the spring, seated in the shade of our favourite avenue, I breathed the soft sweet air and lifted up my heart to God in pious ejaculations, thanking Him for the peace of mind and conscience He had given me; while no sound disturbed the stillness around me, save the music of the scythe through the long thick grass, and the monotonous creaking of the wheels which bore home its fragrant load of hay down the hill-side. No, nothing will ever come up to these delights. The angels alone can have similar joys and similar feelings. I dreamt but of Heaven and of God. I was good, and therefore intensely happy, except for an occasional longing for my home and family. I can imagine nothing more perfect.

This state of mind lasted for three years, with no other interruption than a course of study which had become play to me; excursions at the end of each scholastic year, which were always triumphs; and holidays at Milly, Bienassis, or Grand-Lemps, which were

unmixed felicity although only, as it were, an essay of life. But in spite of my enjoyment, the love of liberty would sometimes overpower all other feelings. I could not help dreaming now and then of a life of entire independence. The Government of Napoleon strengthened these ideas; for every day there were rumours in the college that the Fathers were to be expelled, and that a quarrel had broken out on their account between the Emperor and Cardinal Fesch, the result of which would be that they would have to give up their admirable college, and send us all home.

XXIV.

What had been rumoured came to pass. I then saw how governments are often deceived by their ministers. Buonaparte expelled the Fathers as enemies, and yet they were his best friends. The restoration of the past could not be in better hands than in those of a body of Religious who made us see in him a new Cyrus. But, less of a politician than a warrior, he would owe his throne only to his victories. When they came to an end, the

throne itself crumbled into dust. The preservation of the Jesuits would have secured to him the support of all the higher middle classes and all the aristocracy of France. He ended by having nothing but the army, and lost the hearts of the rest of his people. It was the great fault of his Empire. Omnipotent power is like a bandage on the eyes, which, fearing a rival, destroys an ally, and this ally, although Napoleon knew it not, might have saved him. I left the college, as usual, loaded with academic honours, with a mixture of regret and yet joy in my heart, and I composed some verses of 'Adieu' on my departure which are published in my works.

BOOK III.

I.

HARDLY had I returned to Milly than I felt what a difficulty a young man of my age and class must be to my father and mother. What was to be done with a youth too old to remain idle, too distinguished in his studies not to be ambitious, and too aristocratic to serve the new Government? The *embarras* was great, and helped to strengthen my besetting sins of indolence and indecision. I should not have minded going into the law courts, where many of my companions were learning to become future counsellors or judges; but the pride of my family revolted against the law as a profession. To join the army, which I should have preferred, would have involved me in the service of the present dynasty, which my parents might recognise, but whom they would not allow

me to serve. To be auditor of the Council of State (which was offered to me) would result in my being forced to be a flatterer and a tool of the Imperial *régime.* Not one of these positions was possible to one of my birth, society, or antecedents; so that there was no alternative but to wait. It was not my father's fault, whose small fortune and sound common sense would never have refused a career which promised an honourable and independent existence to his son. But my uncles and aunts, who possessed unmixed authority in the family, rejected with indignation any proposal which, in their opinion, would have derogated from the nobility and political feelings of my father. Each time that an offer of this sort was made to me, there arose a cry of reprobation from one and all of them, and especially from my uncle, M. de Lamartine, who was the head of the family, and who ruled his brothers and sisters with absolute authority. He had been a distinguished officer in the light cavalry of Louis XV.'s Guard, and a liberal in politics; but, converted by the terrible events of '93, he

was one who could not bend his legitimate pride to the new doctrine of equality. He ruled supreme in Mâcon, over conservatives and liberals, nobility and *bourgeoisie* by that grand and comprehensive spirit, which everyone appreciated and loved.

The persecution he had suffered under the Convention, rather than compromise his position as an honest man, had reconciled him to the nobility. His large fortune, and the mixed but clever society which he and his sisters had gathered round them, had won for him an ascendancy over the *Tiers ordre.* He was, in fact, a man to whom every one yielded without a question. His word was law; his 'No' conclusive. His strength, in fact, seemed to me to lie in saying 'No.' No one ever dared to resist his will; my father, who was his younger brother, less than any one. He therefore submitted, not in his own interest, for he was the most independent-minded of men, but in the interests of his son.

II.

Things remained in this state of indecision during the autumn and winter which followed my leaving college. Except some poetical jokes with the daughter of Doctor Pascal (who was the doctor and friend of the house, and a most agreeable and distinguished person), a young lady for whom I entertained a kind of Platonic affection, nothing occurred to fill up my time, or divert my mind from dwelling somewhat gloomily on my uncertain future.

But, at the end of the following year, my father and mother took us to pass the winter at Mâcon, in a large house which they had just bought, and in which we installed ourselves. There I first learnt to understand what was meant by a serious passion. It was my first real love. Now, it appears to me to have been only the shadow of it; but the impression it left on my mind was deep and lasting. The lady who awoke this feeling in my heart died not long ago; therefore I

can speak of her without fear; and, indeed, there was nothing in the smallest degree to throw a shade on her memory in the reciprocal affection of two children, for such we both were.

III.

There was, then, at that time in Mâcon, a young girl of fifteen or sixteen, of whom all the town spoke in raptures, not only on account of her great beauty, but of her singular talents and modest grace. Her name was Madlle. P. On her mother's side she was noble; on her father's of the middle class: so that both held her in equal honour, and she was received with the most flattering distinction in both sets of society. She had one brother, a vulgar, common-place man, who seemed to have united in his own person all the defects of the father; whilst his sister had reproduced all the beauty and refinement of the mother, who, in fact, only cared for her. The father never appeared in the drawing-room; he lived alone in his own apartments. The son mixed with the lowest set in the town. Everything was as aristocratic

about the wife as it was plebeian about the husband. There were, in fact, two houses under the same roof; and, in visiting the mother, you were not *censé* to know the father, although he was a man of the strictest probity and honour. These contradictions rarely occur but in small country towns.

IV.

Madlle. P. wore on her face the signs of this strange destiny. She had the most delicate and beautiful figure which any sculptor ever idealised in a sylph. She danced as the dragon-flies skim over the water, her feet scarcely touching the ground. At every ball at which she was present, when the orchestra struck up a waltz, a circle was sure to be formed round her; the women to envy, the men to rave about her; but she never seemed to be conscious of it. This wonderful grace was part of her very nature. Her little oval head resting on her small white neck was beautifully formed. Her eyebrows were finely marked, and her long eyelashes shading her soft downcast eyes, made her look like a

statue of Purity. Her half-shut eyes, her little half-open mouth, her delicate features, and her clear and transparent complexion, gave her face an expression which it was impossible to forget.

It was thus that this beauty suddenly appeared to me, and love first said to my heart '*Here I am.*' I felt a longing desire to go out of the ball-room and breathe the cold fresh air on the borders of the Saône. I did so, and came back when the orchestra struck up a second waltz—then went out—then came back again, till my friends burst out laughing at my proceedings, and called out to me, as I was disappearing a third time. 'Stop! Madlle. P. is going to dance.' She heard them, and cast a grateful glance at me in passing, as much as to say, 'I saw you, and I shall think of you even when waltzing with another.' Every time she passed me, she gave me the same kind, fixed look. That is how our acquaintance began.

When the ball was over, I staggered out like a drunken man I followed a whole troop of young men who escorted her to her

door. I saw that, after having wished them good-bye, she still sought some one else. I did not dare advance, or go back. I stopped still. The door, which opened on some turning steps, as is often the case in Mâcon, was suddenly thrown open, and threw her back down the first step. Her mother uttered a cry of fear. I rushed forward and caught her, as she was falling, in my arms. Directly after I wanted to retire, but her mother called me back. 'Ah, sir!' she said, 'you must give us leave to express our thanks; come in; and as our introduction has been so obliging a one on your part, I must insist on making your acquaintance, and my child will promise you the first dance at the next ball.' I followed her into the drawing-room where she gave us tea, and I asked permission to come the following day and inquire after the young lady. Her mother granted it with great kindness, her daughter thanked me with a look. I went out of the house mad with joy. For a long time I watched, from the angle of the quay, the lights from her window, which gradually

went out; and I felt that that beautiful pure child was dreaming in her little bed. Did she think of me? I wondered. I came home very late and alone; but I could not sleep; my heart was too overflowing with happiness.

V.

The next day, when the salon of Madame P. opened to receive her friends, I was one of the first arrivals. I found Madlle. P. alone. She was evidently as much afraid of missing my visit as I was of not finding her. Thus our two hearts understood each other without a word; the same electric spark of sympathy ran through us both. The mother came in soon after, and received me as if I had been an old friend of the family. She did not visit my mother, for they were not in the same set of society. She knew her, however, by sight, and had that affectionate respect for her character which every one felt in the country. But the pride of my uncles and aunts would not have permitted the mixture of the old nobility with the new *régime*, or allowed them to be invited to our house. We only met, there-

fore, at the balls of the Prefecture, or at the fêtes occasionally given in the Town Hall, when there was, of course, a mixture of classes.

VI.

Madame P. was proud of her daughter. She had given her the education of an artist. She had learnt every possible accomplishment, especially dancing; that silent art which suited the dangerous times in which we lived, when an imprudent or incautious word might have had serious consequences. In those days a good dancer was as much esteemed as a clever orator or writer is now. Madlle. P. was really a modern Terpsichore. Her tall and elegant figure, the perfect suppleness and grace of her movements, the beauty of her arms, the delicacy of her feet, the soft languor of her expression, captivated everyone even before she moved: but, when she began to dance, her lightness was such that she seemed hardly to touch the ground.

Her mother never took her eyes off her child. You saw that she was wrapt up in her, and that she was in fact the pride of her life.

She had heard people speak of me as having had a brilliant career at college, of which not only my family but all Mâcon was proud. She was consequently flattered that I should have become the admirer of her daughter. She treated me as somebody and something above the rest; and flattered my self-love almost to the extent of compromising her charming child. In the very first conversation we had together she took care to make me understand that there were but two beings among the young people of Mâcon whom she considered worthy of attention—her daughter and myself: the one for her beauty and talents; the other for my birth, and for the superiority I had shown to all my academical rivals. She thus, as it were, set us apart, in a little world, to ourselves—a position which we were nothing loath to accept. At our very first meeting our eyes had said the same thing to each other, and we did not want even her mother's help to fall in love! Henceforth there was a sweet mystery between us; that is, we adored each other, and despised every one else. Her mother was a sort of accomplice, as she had been, from the

first, our confidante. I very soon became the friend of both, and the *habitué* of the house. All the town seemed to me to favour my suit. Everyone was full of the passionate affection which had broken out between the queen of the balls, Madlle. P., and the young student from Milly, who had so distinguished himself at college, and had fallen in love at first sight. Men smiled and women sympathised in our wooing. My family only either did not or would not see what was going on; and I took care not to enlighten them.

There was a lady in Mâcon, Madame L., who was noted for her beauty, but of a rather doubtful reputation, and who had married, late in life, an old knight of St. Louis, who was a near relation of my father's. She kept open house, receiving every evening a large and somewhat mixed society, among whom Madame P. and her daughter were always found. When eight o'clock struck, Madame L. used to retire to her own apartments; but the party went on, and Madame P. and her daughter and a good number of young people stayed chatting till midnight, or else got up some music, with

that easy, happy familiarity which is the result of intimate acquaintance on all sides. One heard bright jokes and merry laughter all round; but the happiest were those who, like me, leaning over the piano, listened breathlessly to the touching voice which spoke words understood only by ourselves. Such were our happy evenings; and, when we parted, it was sadly, perhaps, but full of hope for the morrow. We did not use to say much to each other, but our silence was understood, and without words we knew at what hour we should pass by a certain street the next day, at what precise time we should meet in the green paths of St. Clément, and exchange a look—without stopping to speak, or awakening the suspicion of indifferent people; sure of one another, and reckoning on making up for our silence by a long talk in the evening. Until then it was joy enough to have seen each other, if but for a moment. When a ball drew near, the consultation as to the dress to be worn, and the colour of the bouquets to be chosen, was quite sufficient to satisfy us. Each understood the other, and our hearts needed

no further symptoms of a love which knew no bounds. Her mother did not attempt to interfere with us. I saw, on the contrary, that she enjoyed it. As to the father, he never appeared either in his own house, or in any other society. He was constantly at magistrates' meetings, or in his own quarters; and only saw his child's dress as she crossed the road to go to the ball, of which she was the chief ornament.

VII.

Thus passed this happy and mysterious winter, which appeared to me to last but a day.

However spring came, and the first green of the meadows gave a tender shade to the willow leaves by the river side. Walks outside the town, in which we always contrived to meet, had replaced the musical *soirées* at Madame de L.'s. A young lady of Mâcon generally accompanied Madlle. P., and by her amiable conversation enabled me to have many a *tête-à-tête* talk with her whom I loved. We profited by these moments, which

friendship had so good-naturedly contrived for us; and it was very rarely that we met any one, or were interrupted. However, once or twice we met a man standing at the corner of the hedge close to the charming village of St. Clément, and he always bowed and looked at us with a certain amount of curiosity. This gentleman, whom I only knew by name, was, however, well known in the town. He was an old friend of the family of P., and lived, since the Revolution, on a pretty little property in the village of St. Clément, where he was looked upon as a speculative philosopher, given chiefly to agriculture and contemplation. I appeared to be a special object of his attention, which rather annoyed me and made me anxious. I fancied that the rumour of my attentions to the young lady had reached him, and that he perhaps wished to judge by my appearance, if I were a man calculated to make her happy. I did not dare own my fears, however, to her who was the cause of them. But, before long, I did not fail to be enlightened on the subject.

Some days after, Madame P. told me that

M. F. C. had the custom of giving a little *fête champêtre* every spring to her daughter and herself in his orchard at St. Clément; that his wife helped him to do the honours with her beautiful flowers, and her fresh eggs and cream, which were noted all over the country; that he had written to propose the following Sunday in the afternoon for their visit; that, having seen us together several times, he had ventured to ask me to join them, and had begged her to be the bearer of the invitation. I was delighted to have my share in this little family gathering, and concluded, in consequence, that I was not displeasing to their old friend and counsellor. I saw that Madlle. P. was equally pleased, and prepared myself joyfully for the Sunday's *fête*. Madame de L. and Madame de X. were also invited; but I was the only *man* admitted, which filled me with hope.

VIII.

At last the Sunday came, and Madame P., her daughter, her two friends, and I started separately for St. Clément, not to attract the attention of the Mâcon gossips. We met in

the steep and narrow path which led to M. F. C.'s villa, about half a league from the town, and in a few minutes found ourselves at the door. Mons. and Madame F. C. were waiting for us on the threshold, and received us as if we were the only guests they expected in the course of the year. Their first kind words were for me. 'Young man,' said the philosopher, 'you are welcome to my hermitage; and, as you are the friend of these ladies, you must look upon us likewise as your friends, for we have none dearer at Mâcon.' Then, taking the arm of Madlle. P., whilst his wife took the other ladies into the house, he led her and me all over the gardens, kiosks, and orchards of his pretty home, and made us eat the strawberries and cherries which grew in his beds in such wonderful profusion. 'What a delicious place!' we exclaimed, 'and how one would like to live here for ever!' 'Yes,' replied the old man, smiling; 'but to be perfectly happy there must be *two*, must there not, for nature only seems to grant happiness to man on that condition?' Madlle. P. blushed and looked at me as she hung down

her head. I coloured too. But our host did not seem to perceive it, and went on gathering some beautiful large gooseberries, and throwing them into her lap, while our talk became more and more intimate, till at last, on suddenly turning a corner, we found ourselves opposite a thatched summer-house, where the luncheon was already prepared. We went in with him, and exclaimed at the beauty of the fruit, the richness and thickness of the cream, the great cheeses of St. Clément, the delicate cakes, so exquisitely light and varied, and all made by his wife; and at the good wines, both white and red, which were the produce of his own vineyard. 'Let us sit down, dear children,' said the old man, 'whilst we are waiting for those ladies; let us have a little comfortable chat. Now tell me, young man, what do you like best in my country retreat?' he added, with a kind smile. 'I can feel nothing but the happiness of being here, sir,' I replied. Madlle. P. looked at me again and coloured. 'But,' he continued, 'one sees the sun this year everywhere. So you do the running waters, and the shady nut avenues, and the flowers and the

fruits. Can you not find all these equally at Mâcon?' I smiled, and replied, 'Yes, certainly, one can find these things elsewhere.' 'Well, then, it is not this which makes you so happy that you feel that you cannot be more so! What is it, then? Now to enable you to find out, I am going to leave you for a few moments, and go and seek those ladies. You shall tell me when I come back.' And he went out with an air of secret satisfaction, and left us together.

IX.

As for me, I was certainly a thousand times happier than I had ever been in my life, but also a thousand times more timid and embarrassed. My looks, my sighs, and my attentions had often told her the state of my feelings; but I had never ventured on any actual avowal of my passion till this old man, as it were, forced it upon me. Covering my face with my hands, I remained silent.

'Let me go!' exclaimed the poor child, her shaking voice betraying her emotion; and she got up to escape. These words broke the spell, which seemed to enchain my speech. 'Oh, no!'

I at last cried, throwing myself at her feet. 'You shall not go till my heart has spoken. Do not look at me; but let me only say that what makes me so intensely happy here is neither the sun, nor the trees, nor the flowers, nor the waters; but simply that I am here with *you*, and that I can at last tell you how I love you.' A soft sigh was my answer. 'Let us go,' she repeated; 'though I have said nothing, you will understand me.' We went out after this double avowal, both of us scarlet with emotion, and soon met the old man, talking in a low voice with Madame P., who was leaning on his arm. We turned away, but he had seen our troubled faces, and understood all.

X.

When we returned to the house, we found the rest of the company. Madame F. C. made us see the inside of her house, the library, the drawing-room, the courtyard, the pigeon and chicken-houses, until our emotion was a little calmed, and then they came to announce that the luncheon was waiting in the summer-house. A silent joy filled both our hearts, which were

overflowing with tenderness and trust. At last we felt sure of our mutual love. The old man seemed as happy as we were. He talked to us all the time about the happiness of his country life, alone with the only human being he cared for, and who was his wife. Madlle. P. looked at me from time to time with a soft smile. I felt I had nothing more to wish for here below. I came back in the evening, walking before Madame P. and her friends, and telling her daughter all the thoughts of my heart—thoughts which I did not know I possessed till then, and which she alone could have inspired. Everything now was understood and clear between us, and we had only to wait till circumstances should enable us to consummate the happiness the first germs of which had been revealed to us in the summer-house.

XI.

A few moments later our hopes were rudely dashed to the ground. I had gone home with them, and we were sitting side by side on a sofa, whilst her mother was dressing in an adjoining room, of which the door opened into the

drawing-room. We spoke low; for who likes such confidences to be overheard, however innocent? The mother, who thought our silence strange, suddenly and softly opened her door, and whilst I (who had my back turned to the door) was whispering my fond hopes into the ear of her daughter, I felt a heavy hand laid upon my head; whilst, with her other arm, she violently pushed her child away from me. 'Is this the *réticence* which you had promised me, and in which I was such a fool as to confide? Leave my house this instant, sir; and you, mademoiselle, take care never to appear without me in a room where this young man is present. You are both unworthy of my trust!' I sprung up, humbled and indignant, at this unexpected outburst. Taking my hat, I prepared to leave; but protesting against this unfair imputation on the purity of her child. The poor girl herself burst into tears, and indignantly repelled her mother's unworthy suspicions. Madame P. saw she had spoken precipitately, and colouring, made some excuse. After a time we made it up. We promised to hold our tongues, and

be only to each other as a very dear brother and sister. Our love remained the same as ever—the dream of two young pure hearts, who had nothing to reproach themselves with but love!

XII.

It was, however, impossible to stop the gossip of the town, and the affair soon came to the ears of my family. My mother spoke to me about it. I answered by asserting that I never could love a more accomplished or charming girl. She was wise, and agreed with me as to the superiority of Madlle. P.; but she represented to me, tenderly yet firmly, that we were both too young to think of settling in life, and that we must wait many years before it would be prudent to think of marriage. This answer calmed and quieted us, without extinguishing our mutual passion. Not to argue or positively refuse, but to counsel hope and patience, is the wisest remedy for the insane desires of extreme youth. I felt that I must have some change of scene and thought. My family were of the same opinion, and arranged it as if by chance.

The daughter of Madame de Roquemont (that cousin of my mother's of whom I have before spoken) had just married at Lyons. The honeymoon was to be spent in Italy. Certain business reasons served as a pretext for the young couple to visit Milan and Leghorn, where their parents had correspondents in certain commercial houses. It was settled that I was to accompany them. Three months before they had come to Mâcon to see my mother, and now they returned to arrange about the time of our departure.

XIII.

This journey to Italy was an immense joy to me. I left my love, it was true, but only for a few months, with the certainty that she would remain true to me, and with her equally firm persuasion that I should return with a heart as devoted to her as ever. The trial was short; the happiness certain. So I gave my whole mind to learning Italian, and devoted myself especially to Tasso, Ariosto, Alfieri, and others. Towards the end of that spring we parted. I had a perfect thirst for

travelling. It seemed to me like the passion of the Infinite, which had no limits. Each new country appeared as a new world added to creation. My delighted curiosity seemed to grow at every turn of the wheel.

I never shall forget the descent on Turin by the summits of the Mount Cénis, where I felt as if I were crossing the boundaries of the old world. Then the galloping along, by post, across the gigantic plains of Lombardy at night, the graceful vine-branches hanging in festoons over the carefully-cultivated arable below, teeming with rich crops of Indian-corn; whilst the moon, as large as Roland's buckler, rose above the horizon, and flooded the whole country with light. I staid some days at Milan, enchanted with the beauty of the women and the harmonious language of the men. The French appeared to me barbarous, and the Italians gods. Placentia, Ferrara, Parma, and Bologna seemed but halts on the way to Paradise, and Florence Paradise itself! I spent several weeks there, in a state of excitement which scarcely left me the power of judging or seeing things fairly. At last we got to

Leghorn, on the borders of that exquisite Mediterranean—a visible infinity to infinite thought!

My travelling companions having the intention of spending some months here, took a house; while I went to an hotel in the next street, from whence I came every day to dine with the family. I passed several months in this way, hard at work all day at the *Lingua Toscana*; and all the evenings at the theatre or the opera; but I found time to write to my mother, and that with all the pride of my newly acquired knowledge. I may say that this time was my honeymoon of thought: my enthusiasm had found a new element on which to feed. I wrote also occasionally to Madlle. P., but, at the risk of shocking my readers, I must own that my passion for her had a good deal cooled, and at last froze, like a globe which is removed from the sun. I had a pleasing remembrance of her, but that was all; my new passion for travelling had extinguished my rural flame of St. Clément. The remarkable faces of the Italian women had not perhaps more beauty than Madlle. P., but of a far more sensational kind. And then they

were Tuscans, and their beautiful tongue seemed to me to have the accent of heaven itself.

XIV.

The month of October drew near, when we were to start for Rome and Naples. But letters from Lyons changed the plans of my companions. It was decided that they should return home at once, without proceeding any further on that delightful tour which we had planned together! The blow was terrible; but I soon determind that their plans should not affect mine. I wrote to my father begging his permission to continue my journey, saying that I was only a few steps from Rome, that dream of my youth, and very few more from Naples, the centre of all human delights; that it would be too cruel to dash the cup from my lips, which I had only just begun to taste; that I had enough money to spend the winter at Rome; that, in the spring, I should obtain from M. Dareste de la Chavanne (a relation of my mother's living in Italy) the sum necessary to go on to Naples; and that, therefore, I was going to take his permission for

granted and start for Rome where his answer would find me. It was a bold step on my part; but, after all, not an unreasonable one.

Having written, I waited a few days for a reply; determined, however, that, should it be in the negative, it would arrive too late; and then started joyfully back to Florence, to make the necessary arrangements for my solitary journey to Rome.

XV.

There were only two regular ways of travelling at that time in Italy—by post or *vetturino*; but the former was beyond my means, and the latter was too hopelessly slow. Sometimes one had to wait five or six days before the driver had made up his party; and then, going on always with the same horses, which had to stop and bait continually on the road, you were an age reaching your destination.

From time to time, however, you could get a place in the mail-cart; and that I determined to try for. A man named *Tagglio Vino* offered

me a place in one of these conveyances; we were to sleep for two or three hours in an *osteria* in the mountains; but to reach Rome in four or five days. I agreed to be ready the following evening at night-fall in one of the faubourgs of Florence; and accordingly, at the given hour, Taglia Vino and his carriage made their appearance.

I found four persons already settled inside, but my curiosity as to my fellow-travellers had to wait till daylight, for they all went to sleep soon after we started.

The first was a young man towards whom every one showed great respect. Taglia Vino knew him and called him 'M. Le Duc,' and was constantly on the watch to do him some little service. This care seemed to me to be needful; for though the weather was excessively cold, and we had to cross the snowy mountains of Camaldoli, he wore the thinnest possible coat, with short breeches, silk stockings, and thin shoes, as if he had just come out of a ball-room. The very sight of him froze me; but he did not seem to feel it, and continued his journey with great gaiety and good humour.

The second was a young man with a charming countenance, who appeared to be the son of the actor, Davide, an old and well known singer, who was very famous at that time in Italy, You will very soon see why I said *appeared to be the son.* This young man had the long hair of a woman hanging over his shoulders; his features were soft and delicate, but his black eyes brilliant and bold. I could not help lowering mine when he looked at me. The third traveller was Davide himself, a cheery, fat, jolly old man, a good and rather comical talker, and reminding one of Lablache. Everything he said began with a joke and ended by a hearty laugh. No one could help liking him.

We were very soon all four fast friends. The pretended son of Davide seemed to be particularly attracted by me. He always followed me when we got out of the carriage to walk up the hills, and explained the country to me which he knew thoroughly. At Terni he pointed out the remains of the magnificent Roman bridge the arches of which unite the hills of Clitumna to the Roman

Campagna. When we first caught sight of the Eternal City on her Seven Hills, the Duke, Davide, and his companion urged me to go and lodge with them in the *Via Condotti*, at the inn where they generally stayed, and which was the *rendezvous* of the greater portion of the French, German, and Swiss travellers. I accepted their proposal with joy; it made me feel at once at home, and as if my companions and myself had become one family; Taglia Vino even was less of a driver than a friend.

At last, towards evening, we perceived, above the fogs of the Tiber, something immense, which seemed to float in the heavens and which reflected the last rays of the setting sun. It was the dome of St. Peter's. The night was closing in when we reached the *Piazza del Popolo*. The Via Condotti was to be our destination; they gave me a very pretty room, and the Duke went to the opera to see his illustrious parents; Davide and his son were lodged in an adjoining apartment. I could not sleep for thinking of Rome: it was, however, very sad and very desolate just then. There was neither Pope nor Cardinals: Buona-

parte had made a clean sweep of them all. The Pope was at Savona. A good royalist, M. de Chabrol, exercised the most obliging and respectful guard over the Vicar of Christ, who was dumb, for, by refusing him pen and ink, they had deprived him of the means of writing, and, by shutting the door on his friends, of the means of escaping; but in the meantime the prefect acquired thus the universal esteem of the Royalists. Rome at this moment resembled a western Thebes, weeping for her departed oracles. The population of this ruined capital only amounted to 50,000 souls, and everything was melancholy and neglected. The next morning I found the young Duke in the room next to mine. He was going on to Naples to rejoin his family and gave me *rendezvous* there at the end of the winter. A strange fate awaited our friendship. I knew his name, because it was an illustrious one; but he did not know mine, which was then unknown. He took me upon trust. I found him afterwards at Naples, and he introduced me to his sister-in-law at the *Riario* Palace. She was a princess of royal

German blood, and full of grace and goodness. After this presentation I lost sight of him and he of me: he never knew the name of the young Frenchman with whom he had travelled from Florence to Rome. Thirty years after, he came to Paris and married a widow, the sister of the illustrious Berryer, who was proud to add a noble name and title to her own. I learnt quite by accident that my old companion and friend of these early days had become my neighbour. I did not, however, attempt to renew our previous short acquaintance, although I had at that time become famous myself in my own country. We went on with our mutual incognito, and we did well: it was not worth while to disenter the ghost of past memories. He is himself dead this winter at Paris; we shall know each other in another world.

XVI.

The next morning on going down to breakfast, I found the good Davide and his companion, the latter transformed into a beautiful woman. Her name was Camilla; she was a

singer in Davide's theatre, whom he took about with him from kindness, so that she might be under his care and protection.

'One's clothes do not change one's heart,' said Camilla to me, smiling at my astonishment. 'Only you will no longer sleep on my shoulder, and, instead of receiving flowers from me, *you* must get *me* some.' Davide and his pupil spent several weeks at Rome. Camilla knew the town by heart, and used to take me at the best hours for seeing this beautiful city—the morning under the dome of the stone pines in the Pincio; the evening under the shade of the grand colonnade of St. Peter's; by moonlight in the solemn enclosure of the Coliseum; and in the glorious autumn days to Albano, Frascati, or the Temple of the Sybil, echoing with the foaming cascades of Tivoli. Camilla was bright and gay, like a figure of eternal youth amidst these vestiges of bygone times; she danced on the tomb of Cecilia Metella; and while I was sitting dreaming on a funeral mole, her beautiful but somewhat theatrical voice echoed through the Palace of Diocletian.

In the evening we returned to the city, our carriage full of flowers and fragments of marble, and rejoined her old companion Davide, whose affairs kept him at Rome, and who took us to finish our day in his opera box. The fair singer, who was a good deal older than I was, had no other feeling for me than a kind of brotherly liking. I was much too shy to show any other; but, besides, I did not feel any more affection than herself in spite of her beauty and my youth. Her man's dress, her easy familiarity, the male sound of her contralto voice, and the freedom of her manners gave me the impression of her being simply a handsome young man, whom I could treat as a companion and a friend. When Davide left the hotel in the Via Condotti, I went to seek a lodging for the winter elsewhere.

XVII.

I had taken an Italian professor, who had been introduced to me by a German of great distinction, the brother of M. de Humboldt and an eminent diplomatist, who dined at the same table d'hôte as myself in the Via

Condotti. This old professor was called *Giunto Tardi.* He was a very handsome man, and had married a Russian widow lady. He had been named consul at Rome during the short-lived reign of the Republic, which the French soldiers had quickly crushed. Giunto Tardi had gone quietly back to his position as a Roman citizen; but his moderation and justice, during his short tenure of office, had given him a high place in the esteem and consideration of his countrymen. He lived as a poor man, but much respected in the town which he had governed, and maintained himself by teaching rich strangers his native language. I took him not only to teach me Italian, but as a master of literature, and we became great friends. I shall have occasion later to mention his brother, who bore the same name, but who was a distinguished painter. I was his guest for a few days, and he set me the example of every Christian virtue.

XVIII.

M. de Humboldt, the Prussian diplomat, was a man whom I thought far superior to

his brother, the author of 'A Journey to South America' and 'Cosmos,' whom I also knew but esteemed less, in spite of his great name and reputation. A clever man he was; but without much real merit; it would be difficult to cite anything remarkable in his works, except his adulation of French philosophers and heroes of various shades of opinion, as he had discovered that theirs was the only real European glory. People speak of him as 'the friend of Arago,' 'of Chateaubriand,' 'of Napoleon,' 'of Louis XVIII.,' &c. &c.; he always, in fact, worshipped the rising sun, and managed to get a reflection from its rays. This reflection (accumulated during thirty years) made him appear to many as a bright light, while he was in reality only a flashing firework.

When one considers his extraordinary reputation and the mediocrity of his talents, one is bound to acknowledge that he was a master of *savoir faire.* His brother, on the contrary, was a frank, modest, and clever statesman. He flattered none, but won the good will and esteem of everyone. This is the feeling with

which he inspired me at eighteen, and I have seen no reason to change my opinion since. The other obtained his reputation by a cheat, which is worse than not having deserved it.

XIX.

When Davide, Camilla, and M. de Humboldt were gone, I stayed alone in Rome with no other companions than the monuments and ruins, which Camilla had made familiar to me, and my Italian master. I asked the latter if he would allow me to make acquaintance with his brother, to which he consented. I went daily to see him. His studio was an isolated convent in an obscure corner of Rome. He sold me a charming picture of the Cascades of Tivoli for a few Roman scudi. It is a model of beauty and patient skill. I still have it at St. Point, and look at it whenever I wish to remember those happy, peaceful days.

Another artist, a lady named *Bianca Boni*, did a beautiful copy of Guido for me which I have never parted with. It is a Virgin, but with an exquisite expression. The fea-

tures are angelic, and the forehead, mouth, and neck are positively radiant with light. Her eyes are looking upwards, as if they could not think of sublunary matters. A large blue veil falls over her head, hides her hair, and falls on her shoulders. Everything in this composition is ideal, chaste, and pure; it is better than a woman, and more than an angel; it is the Virgin before the Annunciation.

I had my picture taken by Bianca for my mother; and as she was young, gentle, and very attractive, I was fool enough to fall in love with her, and let her see it. She was furious, destroyed the likeness she had taken of me, and sent me back the money she had received for the portrait. I wrote a humble note of excuse and apology, and left the sum again at her door, telling her that I had been justly punished in being deprived of the work of her hands; but that it was not just that she should lose the price of her time which was so precious to her; and so implored her to receive back the money. But she was inexorable, and made me feel

that these great Italian artists are likewise women of high and unimpeachable virtue. I distributed the money she would not accept among the poor. Such was the result of my first adventure in Rome. Bianca Boni inspired me ever after with a respect which was worth a good deal more than my stupid affection.

XX.

The old painter, brother of Giunto Tardi, was another object of my esteem; I might almost say, of my veneration. He rarely left his studio but to go to mass with his wife and daughter, a young girl of sixteen, as virtuous and good as himself. Their house was a species of monastery, where work was only interrupted by a frugal repast and by prayer.

In the evening, when the last rays of the setting sun lit up the windows of the poor artist, and when the bell of the neighbouring convent sounded the *Ave Maria* (that beautiful and harmonious Italian 'Adieu' to

the past day), the great delight of the family was to repeat the Rosary and Litanies together in a kind of plain chaunt; until the voices, sinking from sleep or weariness, dropped off into a vague, monotonous murmur, like the gentle ripple of the waves on the shore, as the wind drops with the evening tide. I loved this pious and Christian scene when the day's toil was closed by this beautiful hymn, rising to heaven from such pure hearts and sweet voices. It used to carry back my thoughts to Milly, where my mother always gathered us together in the evening to pray, either in her own room or in the garden, ere the twilight had faded into night. Finding thus the same habits, the same acts, the same faith as at home, I felt myself drawn closer and closer to this hitherto unknown family. I never saw greater recollection, greater piety, or a life of more sanctified labour than in the humble home of this poor Roman painter.

I used to leave them after this and return home. I dined sparingly and then

went to my solitary room to read and write till sleep overcame me. My life was like that of a recluse, for I knew no one at Rome; but I was not bored for a moment. Solitude made me better and drew me closer to God: this I have always felt through life.

BOOK IV.

I.

One day, at the table d'hôte of the Via Condotti, I became acquainted with a young Lyons merchant, who, after a time, proposed that we should go together to Naples. This young man was gentle, good, and well educated. I accepted his proposal, and had no occasion to repent it. He was a very agreeable companion, and we started in his own carriage.

We slept at Terracina, the brigands having made night-travelling too perilous. We went on the next day, and suddenly heard a succession of shots fired in an olive wood on our left. Soon we came upon a carriage half-burnt lying in the middle of the road, which was that of the courier from Rome to Naples. Two bodies of travellers were lying dead on the roadside, and a wounded horse lay in the middle. Some soldiers were guarding them, while others were pursuing the assassins, and

firing on them as they fled from rock to rock of the mountains above us. We were very much shocked, and continued our journey not a little saddened by the scene we had just witnessed.

II.

We arrived at Naples as the night fell; the noise and bustle of the streets and public thoroughfares positively deafened us; while the sea was lit up by the reflection of the countless lights which burned in the shop windows, or in the niches of the Madonna. We drove through the street of the 'Florentines,' which crosses that of 'Toledo,' and stopped at an hotel well known to my Lyons friend. After the silence and stillness of Rome we seemed to have passed into a new world. The next morning I was woke by some monks who sang verses in our honour, and brought us magnificent fruits from Castelamare, and other presents from the convent, for which, however, we had to pay handsomely. Then I got into a little carriage and went all over this enchanting town. I was quite delighted. No city had ever produced such a magical effect

upon me; Rome was a monastery, Naples the garden of Eden.

Nature and man seem to have combined to produce this most perfect spot. The grotto of Pausilippo, where you pass through utter darkness to find on the other side the green plain of Pozzuoli and the azure bay of Baiæ; Virgil's tomb, where the old poet seems to sleep under his laurels to the lulling tune of the sea waves; the 10,000 villas which crowd the Chiaja; the never-ceasing noise and bustle of the Via di Toledo; the royal palace and its terrace, where one sees a picture of Murat reading a letter from Buonaparte; the theatre; the market-place; the different cries and costumes of the men, women, and children, selling fish on the shore; the monasteries and church steeples; the religious habits mingled with the peasants' dresses; the beautiful country-house of the king (*Capo di China*), rising like a white phantom from its groups of cypresses and Italian pines; another palace, like the *Reine Jeanne*, jutting its bistre-coloured rocks into the sea; Vesuvius soaring above all, with its light cloud of smoke like a priestess playing

with the coals of her censer; add to this a sun without a cloud, filling one's heart with gladness. and a sky of the deepest ultramarine—and my readers will understand how it was that I returned to my hotel more elated even than when I went out.

From that moment I was scarcely myself; I was boiling all over with emotion, and could not stay still in one place. I rushed off to the post office; they spread out a quantity of letters on a board before me. I found one addressed to myself, which was given to me readily enough when I had paid the postage. It was from my old friend M. de Virieu, to whom I had written from Rome. He replied that he was just starting from Grand Lemps with his mother's consent, and with a letter of credit on Rome and Naples, and that he should join me almost as soon as I had received his letter.

In fact he arrived a very few days after. He met me at the hotel *Fiorentino*, where I had prepared a room for him, and where we became intimate with a young Calabrian gentleman, who initiated us into the mysteries of gam-

bling. This was the first time that that wonderful temptation had assailed us. At that period in Naples the great game was the *trenta e quaranta*, played in a public room at the end of the Via di Toledo. This young Calabrian was married, but as inexperienced as ourselves. We used to spend hours in losing or spending a few *carlini*.

III.

I had all this time a kind of compunction about certain letters of introduction which my mother had given me to M. de la Chavanne, director of the tobacco manufactory at Naples, and which I had hitherto neglected to deliver. Liberty without control seemed to me infinitely pleasanter. At last, however, I felt I could no longer delay my visit. I inquired for his house and was directed to a magnificent establishment dedicated to *St. Pietro Martyro*, in the most noisy quarter of the town. It was just midday; I climbed up a magnificent staircase of 120 steps till I got to the fifth or sixth story. Below was a large garden surrounded with arcades. These arcades and the

lower story of the house were filled with vats, workshops, and other things belonging to the state manufactory. I took in every detail of this picture, which remained indelibly impressed upon my mind, as it led to one of the great events of my life, and in fact was to bring about a decisive change in my existence.

Arriving out of breath at the top story, I rung at a great door which gave entrance to a large and long cloister, out of which opened different doors to the right and left. At the end of this gallery were three large windows called *finestrati*, which threw a brilliant light on the cloister itself. A number of young girls crossed and recrossed this place every moment, carrying I knew not what in their aprons. I found afterwards that these children were employed in choosing the finest tobacco leaves for the manufacture of cigarettes. I was far from imagining that one of these very girls would soon become *Graziella*, change her occupation, and influence for ever my future life. I did not dare own the truth when in 1847 I wrote the novel of Graziella,

which had such a success because everyone recognised that it was true to nature. I had from vanity altered the first few pages, but all the rest was exact. Now I am going to make a full confession of the whole facts, and give you the true history of 'Graziella.'

IV.

At the end of the cloister to the right, I perceived an open door and a good many servants, going backwards and forwards, carrying plates and dishes, while inside the room I heard the clatter of knives and forks. I saw I had inopportunely chosen the time of M. le Directeur's breakfast; but it was too late to go back; I had already sent in my card and was announced.

No sooner had he heard my name, than M. de la Chavanne rose and received me with open arms, exclaiming, 'He is the very image of his mother!' He embraced me with the greatest warmth and tenderness, and made me sit down on a sofa under the window which lighted the breakfast-room. I found out that this house had been a monastery, and that we

were in the room of the old superior of St. Pietro Martyro. Two other persons were breakfasting with M. de la Chavanne: one from twenty to twenty-five years old, named *Antoniella*—a pleasing person but with nothing very striking about her; she was evidently on intimate and confidential terms with the director, and had, as I afterwards found, the superintendence of the young girls employed in the cigar manufactory; the other was a most charming girl, but of her I shall speak later. Our conversation, in which neither young lady took a part, turned entirely on my mother and her family. M. de la Chavanne declared that he would never allow me to remain in an hotel at Naples, and that he would give me a charming little room in his house looking on the sea. He got up to show it to me, and I found a most comfortable room with a camp bed and a winding staircase leading up to the flat roof of this immense convent, from whence there was a glorious view of the sea, with Capri, Sorrento, and Vesuvius. A trellised wall sheltered a portion of this beautiful terrace from the wind; so

that you were at the same time warmed with the genial Italian sun and your head shaded from its rays. I came down quite delighted with my little apartment, promising myself the pleasure of occupying it as soon as possible.

M. de la Chavanne, of whom my mother had often spoken to me, was a man of between forty and fifty years of age, and of remarkable goodness; his frank, cheery face and cordial manner made one love him at first sight. He was tall and large; his honest blue eyes looked you straight in the face, and his mouth alone would have told you his character; it was the very type of benevolence and sweetness. It was really impossible not to love him. He had served valiantly with his countrymen against the army of the Convention at the siege of Lyons. This siege had ruined him, and he had sought refuge in Italy. Here Murat, king of Naples, had given him the directorship of the state tobacco manufactory, a lucrative and honourable post. He established himself at Naples, and became rich and happy. He had left his

wife and several sons in France, whom she had brought up admirably. From time to time she came to see him; he loved her devotedly, and was equally loved by her; the necessity of being so often separated from her was the only thing which ever embittered his life. He lived at Naples as an exile; but as one who endeavoured to forget it by active work for those dear to him. He was adored by all the French in Naples and by the Neapolitans themselves, who knew him by the continual kind services which his position enabled him to render them. He was always kind and generous, fond of young people, and ever ready to contribute to their amusements. Such was the man into whose home I had thus been admitted, and I could have found no one so worthy of my esteem and affection. In taking leave of him, I felt the attraction which he universally inspired, and promised to return in a few days and take advantage of his generous hospitality. I had not then scarcely realised the secret and invincible charm which strengthened my resolution; *i.e.* the thought of seeing once more the

fascinating face I had had a glimpse of at his table.

V.

On returning to Virieu, to whom I had to break my approaching separation from him, in obedience to my mother's wishes, I went to the post and there found a letter directed to me in an unknown writing from Mâcon, which I opened with a trembling hand. It was from the old man of St. Clément, the friend of Madame P., and ran as follows:—

'Sir,—Your age and position made me believe that your affection for Madlle. Henriette P. (of which, as an old friend of her family, I had heartily approved) would result in a union which would secure your joint happiness; your departure and prolonged absence have given rise to certain doubts and scruples in my mind. Madlle. Henriette is very young, and so are you; you are not yet your own master, and you cannot answer for the wishes of your parents. I am, therefore, charged to tell you, in her mother's name, that proposals of marriage have been made to her by another

person, whose character and fortune promise her that which, I fear, it would not be in your power to give her for many years. Be so good, then, as to examine your own heart and conscience, and to let me know whether you still have the same feelings for this young lady as when you left Mâcon; and if her family may expect from you as favourable settlements as those which are now offered her elsewhere. We wait for your answer, and remain,' &c.

VI.

This letter, which was evidently written with the concurrence of Madame P., if not of her daughter, troubled me very much. I took some days to think about it. I certainly was anything but free to choose; I had nothing, or next to nothing, of my own. I could only love her; but I could not, without great imprudence, answer for the consent of my family to a union, which I was not quite sure now of even wishing for myself. So I wrote a frank and prudent letter, explaining my position, and virtually leaving the decision in the hands of Madlle. P. herself.

I learnt soon after that she was about to marry her other suitor. I regretted her; but I felt that her parents were right not to sacrifice the future of their child to an illusion of seventeen. Thus ended my first love dream, which was only a short but delicious bit of imaginary happiness.

I never saw her again for thirty years, when we met, with some regret perhaps, but with no bitterness. There are passages of this sort in most men's lives, which seem to be but dreams of our first youth. Madlle. P. was one of those fancies. She was very happy in her married life, and was united to one who was far more worthy of her than myself. I was still a child, and scarcely knew my own mind. But I wished to be sincere and loyal.

VII.

After having passed a day or two longer with Virieu in our hotel, I went to live with M. de la Chavanne. It was only a few doors off. I used to part with Virieu at night, sure to meet him early the next day; so that he became reconciled to our short separation. M. de

la Chavanne was not at home when I arrived at his house. I was received by his old Neapolitan cook, and by that charming child, Graziella. She opened the door of the little room assigned to me, undid my portmanteau, and placed my things in the drawers, even kneeling down to take the creases out of my clothes. Every movement of hers was full of grace; only she seemed to me more shy and pale than the day I had seen her at breakfast. I scarcely dared raise my eyes to look at her, and felt distressed at her waiting upon me in this manner; but we scarcely exchanged two words. I felt as if she were one of my sisters, who had come as usual to do little things for me on my return from a long journey. The simplicity of her manner and dress added to my illusion.

VIII.

After settling me in my room, we went back to the drawing-room, where she took up her work, and we began to talk a little. Antoniella came in from the large workroom, where she had been superintending her child-

ren,' as she called them, in the cigarette factory. Then came in the master, and the breakfast. We sat down to it as before. 'Now I must introduce you properly to one another,' exclaimed M. de la Chevanne gaily. 'This one is Antoniella. She is a good child, and very useful to me in the factory. She chooses, admits, or sends away the novices of my convent, who number some hundreds, and who are employed not exactly in saying their prayers, but in making cigars and cigarettes. She knows all the poor people and "lazzaroni" of the place, and finds out which of them have too many children to support, and wish to get work in my establishment. She manages all this quite admirably, and lives with me, as you see, like my daughter, to receive and transmit my orders. Everybody is pleased and satisfied with her—employers and employed. My little workwomen are like her own sisters or children. She watches over them like a mother, and reports to their families if there be any cause of complaint in the workrooms; and so she helps me to keep perfect order and peace in the establishment.

They call her in Naples "*la madre delle cigarette.*" ' At these words, Antoniella burst out laughing, and M. de la Chavanne, glancing at her with his kind, paternal face, smiled also. ' Now,' he continued, ' as for this little girl ' (pointing to Graziella, who coloured up to the eyes), ' who is still a child, Antoniella is teaching her French, that she may be some day my interpreter between the administration and the directors, who are our countrymen. She is called "Graziella," and is the daughter of a poor fisherman in the island of Procida, who has a whole tribe of children. She only receives the pay of a cigar workwoman, but she transmits it regularly, at the end of the month, to her mother, *la Procitana*. She does not, however, work with the rest but lives with us, so as to be under the immediate care of Antoniella, who is her friend and protectress. She superintends the house under her directions, and transmits my orders to the servants, who are Neapolitans, and whose "patois" she alone understands. She is still a child, as you see; but a good child, and beloved by everybody. I treat her more as a father than as a master. She orders everything here, and is our aide-

de-camp, or rather, our mouthpiece. Ask for whatever you wish. She is at your orders; only do not look at her dress, which is that of the children of Procitana, of the peasantry of an island from whence Naples obtains her most beautiful and her most useful servants.* Their costume is, in fact, a mark of servitude in Naples, but of nobility in their own island. Go and dress yourself as a "Procitana," he added, turning to Graziella; 'Antoniella will help you.'

The shy and beautiful child went out with Antoniella, and returned in a few moments entirely transformed. It was like a scene in a play. On her feet she had little yellow slippers without heels, of which the leather was finely embroidered in red and silver; her blue stockings seemed not to be knitted, but wove in some kind of bright stuff. A woollen petticoat, with a multitude of fine plaited folds, and of a dark yet bright brown shade, fell to her feet; a boddice of green velvet cut square, and made into a point before and behind, revealed her neck and bosom, but both of which were modestly covered by a

chemisette of fine lace and embroidery closely buttoned down the front. The sleeves and waistband were trimmed with rich braiding and embroidery, and are alike for rich and poor. The headdress, except on a journey, consisted of nothing but a profusion of raven black hair, rolled in a thick cable round the head, like a living turban. Her throat and ears were ornamented with a beautiful necklace and ear-rings of ancient Greek workmanship, and of very fine gold, the pendants of which clicked like the little bells of a horse in a circus. The blushing face of the child revealed a mixture of shame and bashfulness, partly with the consciousness of her own beauty, and partly with the sense of our appreciation of it. We looked at her with mute admiration; and had she been less of a child, I should not have dared to lift my eyes. In a few seconds she disappeared, and ran off to put on her everyday dress. But the effect had been produced and the blow struck. I could not forget it, and henceforth never saw her in her ordinary costume without recalling the *Procitana*, and looking

upon her merely as a shadow of her real self. The dress she generally wore was only a common, coarse, brown stuff, fastened close round her throat, without any ornament whatever, and a simple blue handkerchief tied round her neck. Her beautiful little feet were disguised in untidy, heavy, black shoes, generally down at the heel. Such was the chrysalis—but what about the butterfly?

IX.

Virieu came to see me in the course of the day. His father, as I before said, had commanded the cavalry at the siege of Lyons. M. de La Chavanne had followed him in his last charge, and had been all but a witness of his death. They talked a long time of this fatal day. Virieu dined with us, and was as much struck as myself with the marvellous Grecian beauty of *La Procitana.* That evening Virieu and I went out together, and I accompanied him to his hotel. In passing the Via di Toledo we went in, from curiosity, to the *Palazzo Fiorentino*, opposite the theatre. This was the public gambling house,

permitted but superintended by the police. Immense tables, surrounded with silent players, filled the rooms; great heaps of gold and silver were piled on the green table by the side of each player. We were soon drawn in to join the game, risked some *scudi* and lost. That evening, and the next, and the day after, we did the same. We could not understand why the luck was always against us. Whilst we were grumbling about it in the recess of one of the windows, an old Neapolitan came up to us, and told us, that as long as we played in that way, without sense or plan, we *must* lose; that this game was not one of chance, but of skill and science; that we were not to expect large gains but moderate profits; that he himself had once been a victim like ourselves; but that he now lived on what had formerly been his ruin. We listened to him with astonishment. He saw it, and lowering his voice, proposed to give us lessons at hazard, having been himself a *croupier* of a gambling table, and having masses of cards with which he could prove his theory to our satisfaction.

With the ignorant and self-confident folly of youth, we accepted his invitation, and made an appointment with him the following evening in Virieu's rooms. The old man was punctual, and having thrown on the table a *mass* of cards, that is, ten or twelve packs, the game began.

'Play as you will, gentlemen,' he said quietly,' and I will bet you anything you like that, by the end of the evening, I shall have gained and you will have lost.' He threw down the cards, we played and lost, his gains were very small, but he always won.

We tried twenty times and always with the same result. We were confounded. 'Why then are you not yourself rich?' I asked him at last. 'Because riches are not the result of even successful gambling, but of honest labour,' he replied. 'I never promised that I should show you how to get millions, but small sums. Will you try again?' 'Yes,' we answered. 'Well, I am now going to show you my system, and explain on what it is based. Now listen to me. What is *trenta e quaranta?* A game in which the player,

playing against the bank, gains every time that the colour *black* or *red*, on which he has betted, approaches nearest to the number forty, without going beyond it, for, if it goes beyond, the player is dead. He must, therefore, calculate, as nearly as he can, which is the colour, whether black or red, which offers the best chance of arriving at the winning number, and conform his play to that. Understand, once for all, there is in reality no *luck* in it, only skill and memory.'

X.

The old croupier, without giving us more of his practice and experience, played for another hour, and following out the calculations he had suggested to us, went on winning, while we, trusting to luck, always lost.

He promised to return at the same hour on the following day. I was anxious to find out if it would always come to the same in the long run; and if he could *always* reckon on small but certain sums. The next day, and for twenty days running, we were confirmed in this belief; he steadily won so many

scudi a night, and we lost as many Napoleons. It was becoming serious, and I asked myself: 'But what is the cause? for, after all, chance is but an effect of which we do not see the reason; let us go on and try to find it out.'

All the winter the croupier came, and we devoted our evenings to him, either at Virieu's hotel or at M. de la Chavanne's. One saw nothing but cards. One heard nothing but *trenta e quaranta.* M. de la Chavanne's French friends came and chatted round the braziers, in which the olive wood chips burnt without smoke or flame. Antoniella and Graziella worked on the sofa in the corner of the room. From time to time, Graziella would look up at me and try to smile; but then her face would suddenly become grave, as if she said, 'What a pity that so sensible a young man should have a taste for gambling.'

But the croupier cut his cards perseveringly, and we could discover nothing except the fact, that he regularly pocketed our *carlini.*

XI.

In this way our Naples winter passed until the beautiful early spring lit up the waves and mountains of Castelamare. Vesuvius began to grumble and launch out angry puffs of smoke and flame, from time to time. Virieu was ill, and did not leave his room. I had met on the staircase of his hotel one day, M. Humboldt, the diplomatist, whom we had left at Rome. He received me like a son, and proposed to carry me off with him on a tour he was about to make in Calabria, after he had studied the volcano of which the threatened eruption had become more serious. I accepted his offer with joy; and yet I was sad at leaving Graziella when I thought of her. But as yet we had come to no explanation.

BOOK V.

I.

M. DE HUMBOLDT came to fetch me at M. de la Chavanne's. At the moment of getting into his carriage he asked me: 'Who was that beautiful child?' and I, looking up at Graziella, saw that her eyes were full of tears. Why did she cry; and why did she follow the carriage with her eyes till we were out of sight?

The horses rapidly took us on the road to Pompeii and *Torre dell'Annunziata*, a pretty village which you come to before arriving at Castelamare, and which is built at the foot of the mountain. We put up at a little inn still nearer to Vesuvius, and sent for guides and mules to conduct us to the Hermit whose cell was built on the highest habitable cone. After two or three hours of fatiguing march, either

upon cooling and slippery lava, or on hot ashes, of which the smoke nearly blinded one, we stopped on one of the lower spurs of the mountain. On turning round we felt as if we were floating in the sky: the sea, the islands, the capes, and Naples, all seemed to spring out of the earth at our feet. We could not resist an exclamation of pleasure. At last we reached the hermitage ; the Hermit had ceased to sleep there at night, fearing to be surprised in sleep by a sudden outburst of the volcano. We sat down on the bench at his door, gazing at the wonderful scene beneath us, which the ether seemed to have evoked from the void below. At last the Hermit himself arrived on his donkey, which carried besides a quantity of flasks of *Lacryma Christi*; the hermit having catered for his guests as well as himself, and making us pay largely for the luxury. He was, however, a thoroughly good fellow, not belonging to any regular religious order, but one of those ambulatory friars who attach themselves to certain localities from whence they draw their means of subsistence. I should say that this monk was of the ' Order

of Vesuvius,' and nothing else. He changed his cell according as the eruption changed its course. The rest of the time he entertained travellers; his cell was a picturesque and sacred house of refreshment.

M. de Humboldt and I sat down on each side of his little table, and talked to him about the mountain and the general prelude to the eruptions. I resolved next day to study it nearer by descending the crater. It was of no sort of use my doing so, for I was neither a *savant*, nor a naturalist. I did not even know the names of the scientific specimens which I proposed to bring back with me; but I was just at the age when one wishes to be thought rather foolhardy, let it cost what it might; somewhat of the race of Empedocles, who left his sandals on the borders of Etna. I induced two of our guides to return to Torre dell' Annunziata to fetch the cords necessary for the perilous descent of the crater. M. de Humboldt laughed at my preparations, and endeavoured to dissuade me from so rash an act without any possible object. But I was only the more strengthened in my pride

and folly, and woke the next morning as determined as ever to carry out my plan.

II.

Vesuvius had been silent through the night. The sunrise was magnificent; one saw nothing but a puff of yellow smoke belching forth at intervals from the pointed cone above our heads.

We started early, following our guides, who had brought the cords, which I had ordered, during the night. It was no longer walking but scrambling. Several times we heard the stones and ashes falling round us, causing a sulphurous smoke which blinded us for a few moments until dispersed by the soft morning air. It would seem as if the spirits of this infernal region disputed every step with the human beings who ventured into their precincts. We often had to throw ourselves flat on the earth to avoid the rebound of the stones and pieces of rock as they fell; and only when the eruption ceased for a few moments, could we continue our route.

At last, we arrived at the mouth of the

crater and sat down on the edge, measuring with our eyes, as far as we could, the frightful gulph, half in shade and half in lurid light, which yawned beneath our feet. It was the shape of an enormous funnel of which the base and the sides were coloured, to windward, by the various streams of lava which recent eruptions had deposited on their course. On one side appeared a kind of crystallised salt, white as newly fallen snow; on another, fragments of sulphur as yellow as gold in the crucible. Further on, the sides of the crater had taken the form of pointed, jagged, and still smoking rocks, with here and there bright stalactites which seemed to have frozen as they fell. One portion of this vast basin seemed filled with a brownish substance of which I did not know the name. But, towards the middle of the crater, masses of smoke belched forth, from the midst of which poured out at intervals rivers of flame lighting up the depths of this abyss of wonder and of terror, which might well have served for a picture of the infernal regions. My guides sat down with their cords and said, 'What is the

use of tempting Providence? How much more will you see if you do attempt the descent?' 'I should actually have *touched* it,' I replied. And rising from the hot sand on which I was sitting, I passed my arms through the knots of the cords, and prepared slowly to descend into the crater. Not one of the guides would consent to follow me; but they all hung on to the mouth of the basin, striving to direct my perilous course, and to induce me to return. I reached the flat brown surface I have before described in a few minutes; but the heat increasing in intensity as I neared the burning furnace in the centre, my shoes were at once almost burnt off, and scarcely any sole remained to preserve my feet. I strove to stand on such portions of the sulphur as had cooled a little, and springing across one of the rushing torrents of liquid fire, tried to rest for a moment on a less burning crust. I felt I was lost if the wind, changing for an instant, had driven back upon me the sulphurous flame and smoke, which fortunately it drove, at present, on the opposite side of the crater. My guides called

louder to me than ever to retrace my steps while there was yet time. I hastily knotted together in my handkerchief some specimens of the burning metals around me, and at last gave the signal to be drawn up again from this very hell upon earth. My ascent was accomplished in perfect safety, only my clothes and shoes were burnt to rags. They hailed my return to terra firma with cries of joy, while M. Humboldt hastened to explain to me the names and characters of the specimens which I had brought up from the abyss. We went back to the Hermit's cell, who could not recover his astonishment at my foolhardiness; and a good breakfast, with the help of the Lacryma Christi, made everyone forget my folly.

That evening I would have given all the world to have had no part in this ridiculous adventure. If I had undertaken it as a man of science, to wrest some hitherto unknown secret from nature, it might have been sublime; but undertaken by an ignoramus like myself, the attempt was simply ridiculous. My vanity met with its due

punishment; I had been egregiously vain—that was all; but I reaped what I deserved—that most bitter feeling of a thorough contempt of oneself.

III.

After our breakfast at the Hermit's we returned to Torre dell'Annunziata. The noise in the mountain seemed to increase in proportion as we went further from it: the earth shook under our mules' feet. All the village had turned out. Everyone, in mute despair, lifted their eyes and arms to heaven, and rushed from their houses to see which side of the cone of the crater would open out first and overwhelm with its burning stream of lava, the crops and the vineyards on which their whole existence depended. Every saint in the calendar was invoked in vain by these poor people. All of a sudden, at nightfall, a mighty cry burst forth—the problem had been solved. A great breach had been made in the cone to the south, and the streams of liquid fire were pouring down the sides of the mountain with resistless speed. What direction would the eruption take during the night?

That was the anxious question. We got back to our little inn and supped, passing the greater part of the night at our windows watching the progress of this terrible devastation.

IV.

As soon as it was light, we ran, like everyone else, out of the house, to the base of the mountain. The heavy torrent of lava had made fearful progress during the night, and had already reached not only the vineyards, but the gardens and houses in the upper part of the village of L'Annunziata. Some of these cottages, perched on a little rising ground to the left, were already entirely encircled by the fire. The poor inhabitants were flying from their homes, with cries and tears, carrying with them whatever they could most easily save from the flames. It was a heart-breaking sight. Men were dragging great sacks of wheat, or bundles of Indian corn; women, their cradles full of children, on their shoulders. The animals followed, driven by the boys, and trembling with fear; the very cocks and hens, with half-burnt wings, were fluttering and

striving to hide themselves amidst the vines. It was exactly such a scene as Pliny describes at the overthrow of Pompeii. As the lava slowly but surely encircled its prey, you saw the green vine leaves shrivel up, crackle, and groan, almost like living human beings; and then the branches, despoiled of their now yellow leaves, in their turn becoming crisp, taking fire, and spreading the destructive element along the ground, which had become as a furnace. These agonies of nature were slowly repeated, till each vine had fallen a victim to the destroying element. For me the sight had a sort of fascination, and I forgot that I ran a like danger myself. We had certainly legs wherewith to fly; but if for a moment we were to forget, or that the wind had changed its quarter, the same burning breath would have devoured us like the shrubs, and our calcined bones would have crackled as rapidly as the vine branches. I did forget it several times, and drawing nearer to this bed of fire, the very stick I held in my hand was shrivelled up in a moment. We suddenly saw, from the lay of the ground, that the flames had changed their

course, and that we were in imminent danger of being encircled by them, unless we rapidly returned to the shelter of the town. At last, the lava torrent chose for its bed a narrow valley which led to the sea, crossing the high road to Naples, along which both horses and foot passengers were flying at full speed. But anxious to study this phenomenon to the end, which had been the object of M. de Humboldt's visit, we remained on that part of the road which led to Castelamare and Salerno, till the eruption had ceased. The only sights and sounds which met our eyes the following day, however, were the tears and lamentations of the poor ruined inhabitants. After witnessing this terrible calamity, M. de Humboldt returned to Naples, and I started alone for Castelamare.

V.

After having driven through the picturesque forest of laurels which surround the beautiful villas in the neighbourhood of Naples, I went to Sorrento, which gleamed on the horizon before me like a dream of Tasso's. It was there he went after leaving Ferrara, where the

friendship of the Princes of the house of D'Este had overwhelmed him with favours instead of persecuting him, as I have proved in my Life of Torquato. It was there that he arrived, disguised as a peasant from the Abruzzi, at the house of his sister, who had married a gentleman farmer of Sorrento. There also he made himself known by throwing off his homely dress, and reappearing once more as a poet and a gentleman; and there again he found, after some months' rest, the health and intelligence which his friends had feared were gone from him for ever. I went accordingly to this Homeric scene, worthy of the Odyssey. I know a man more unfortunate than Tasso, and more calumniated by the hatred of men, who have repaid his devotion to the cause of humanity by cruel insults and injury. Those who have thus outraged him to-day will be sorry for it when it is too late. They will find that misfortune is more inconstant than hatred, and that posterity will avenge those who have left that task in other hands.

VI.

After some days spent in making expeditions from this lovely place, I hired, sometimes a *corricolo*, and sometimes a boat, to visit the Temple of Pæstum and La Cava, the most beautiful spot along the whole coast. After spending about a fortnight in these solitary excursions, I found that the high road between Torre dell' Annunziata and Naples was again opened, a certain quantity of earth having been thrown upon the lava bed; so that I took a little carriage, and returned to Naples. My heart was still full of Graziella. I felt that all the emotions of which I could neither speak nor write would be shared in and sympathised with by that delicious child.

On going upstairs at St. Pietro Martyro, I was startled at not hearing her bright voice as usual at the end of the gallery. Everything in the old convent seemed to be as still as death. M. de la Chavanne was in his counting-house. Antoniella was superintending the cigar-makers. My room was shut up. The

only person I could find was the cook, who exclaimed, 'Ah! you will no longer find Madlle. Graziella. She is gone back to the islands to her parents. No one has had any tidings of her since. We suppose she was taken to her grandmother's house at Ischia, from whence she will not come back till after the summer. O! by-the-bye, she left a little note for you, which she told me to give you on your return. Here it is.'

I took the note, which was written, or rather scribbled, in Neapolitan *patois*, as follows: *Già che sei partito, non posser più restar. Non ti rivedrò mai. La damizella* ('From the moment you left, I felt I could no longer stay. I shall never see you again!') Two or three great tears had left their blots on the coarse yellow paper.

This note explained to me that which her eyes at parting had only partially revealed. I went into my room, threw myself on the bed, and burst out crying. Virieu came up a few minutes later, to know if I was returned. He found me in tears, and asked, in utter amazement, what was the matter. Without speak-

ing, I showed him the poor little note. 'Oh,' he exclaimed, 'why, here's the beginning of a beautiful romance! You must go on with it. What a good thing; for I was bored to death!' 'Don't joke about such matters,' I replied. 'Tears at her age are serious.'

I waited till Antoniella came in, and asked her directly where her little friend was gone. 'I do not know,' she replied. 'I went to ask her father on the quay of Pausilippo. There was no one there. The neighbours told me that he had left off coming to Naples, and that they believed Graziella was gone back to her grandmother's house at Procida. Since you went off with that clever German, she never spoke or told me any of her little secrets; only I remarked that she was often crying.'

VII.

When M. de Chavanne came in from his counting-house, I asked him the same question. 'Well,' he answered, laughing; 'it appears that *you* are at the bottom of the despair and the flight of poor little Graziella. We have tried in vain to find her

out, and can only conjecture that, to escape a sorrow which she could not conquer, she is gone back to her old grandmother at Procida. Her good common sense will soon make her see the folly of all this, and if you wish to meet her again, you may be sure to do so in the autumn.'

I was destined to see her long before that. I knew where to find her, and I felt that she had left her comfortable position at M. de Chavanne's for no other earthly reason than disgust at my going off with M. de Humboldt. I knew that she loved me, and that her flight was nothing but a wild declaration of love. I was torn with grief. I felt I could not remain away from her any longer. I have described in my novel, how I rejoined her at Procida. The little details which I have now given to my readers, form the only difference between the fiction and the reality. It cost my pride too much to own that my first deep love had only a cigarette maker for its object, instead of a coral worker, as she became later. Where will not vanity find a peg on which to hang itself?

After this confession, I have nothing to add, but that the rest of the story is literally true. Graziella was as young, as naïve, as pure, as religious as I represented her in my novel. All the scenes therein described are drawn from life. The scene and the actors are simple daguerreotypes. The trade of the child was less vulgar in the novel, but that is all. Our voyage to Procida, and the purchase of the new boat as a present to the family, the joy of the grandmother at its reception, the exclamations of delight from the children, all this is not invented but simply related. So it is with our life in the island, and our mingled feelings of intense joy and sorrow, with our nights on the terrace where we had erected a tent, and our days under the shade of the vineyards where we lived the happy and simple life of the Lazzaroni.*

* See the *Romance of Graziella.* New edition, published by the Company to whom M. Lamartine's works belong. Hachette & Co., 1870.

VIII.

Towards the end of the month of May, my family wrote to Virieu for an explanation of the suspicious life I was leading at *La Margellina.* M. de La Chavanne had evidently written to warn my mother. Virieu, in his warm friendship for me, returned post haste to Naples, and dragged me away almost by main force. I left Graziella drowned in tears, and as I got into the carriage she fainted away. I vowed to return and to live and die at Procida. At Milan I halted for a few days after Virieu had gone, being resolved to try the *rouge et noir* system which he and I had so conscientiously studied at Naples with the old croupier. I faithfully promised Virieu not to retrace my steps to Naples till I had seen my family, but to rejoin them in a fortnight at Milly.

Milan had a gambling table which opened daily at the theatre of *La Scala.* It was there that I determined to try my luck. I was extraordinarily successful. I resolved to reduce

the old croupier's theories to practice. I thought, without always arriving at making the number forty, there was more chance with a good many low cards than with five or six higher ones. Experience had shown me that high and low numbers were dealt out, as it were, in sets and not alternately. I therefore concluded that, by watching carefully the dealing of the cards, I could make pretty sure of those which were left. I followed this method steadily, and won as steadily every night.

I remained a fortnight at Milan, and then started for Lyons with a Swiss merchant from Lausanne and his servant, who took immense care of me on the road, and insisted on my staying a few days at their house, when we reached their home. This old Swiss was a strong liberal, and had little liking, as a Swiss, for the Emperor Buonaparte. I had been bred up in the same sentiments by family tradition. I must own that the inscriptions on the road sides, of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,' made my whole heart thrill with sympathy.

After resting two or three days at Lausanne, I took a little carriage and came back to Mâcon. My father was waiting for me, and received me with the greatest affection, without saying a word of my follies. I felt that I had come back pardoned, and that few sons had a father like mine. Still I was sad as death, though I did not say why. My poor mother cried for joy at my return, after so long an absence. If the rest of the family were displeased with me, they took care to conceal it. Everything seemed forgotten, except in my own heart and in the sick heart of my poor Graziella. Alas! I had not long to wait for news. A traveller passing through Mâcon brought me the tidings of her death, together with her letter of farewell. Her last thought had been for me.

BOOK VI.

I.

I HAVE now described my first loves, my happiness and my misery, and my first journey into Italy. Since that time, Italy became my own country, or, at least, the country of my affections. But my life was about to change entirely. We were in the year 1812–13. Buonaparte, like a man chased by the Furies, had returned from Moscow, where he never should have gone, while the other half of his forces were engaged in Spain, to which country he had no right to pretend. Of 750,000 men whom he had had under arms, only a few thousand remained this side of the Vistula. But in the midst of his reverses he was grand. He never despaired. He gathered together the fragments of his glorious army, and with 300,000 men was fighting a brilliant cam-

paign, though he could not recover the lost ground.

Austria offered him peace and neutrality. She proposed certain concessions not unacceptable to his ambition, or to his former glory. But he preferred fighting on for shadows, and threw the fate of the Empire and of France on one die. At Leipsic he lost all. He came back to Paris without an army. He brought but his genius, his pride, and his authority; in some eyes he became a hero once more, but a hero of adverse fortune. He was compelled to lay down his arms and the Empire at Fontainebleau, and went to the Isle of Elba to reflect upon his crime towards his country. It was the beginning of the end. St. Helena avenged Paris and France.

II.

On my return from Italy, I found France boiling over with indignation at, and opposition to, the Emperor. France never tolerates misfortune in her rulers; excepting the soldiers, there was not a soul who was not entirely alienated from him from one end of

the country to the other. The Royalists conspired secretly with the Revolutionists in 1789, and even in 1792 against despotism. But, in 1813, the conspiracy was open and unanimous. One proof of it was in the impossibility which the Emperor found to recruit his shattered battalions. The passion for glory had been satiated. Everything that has been written on this subject is pure conventionality, even the beautiful military histories of M. Thiers. His relations of the campaigns are admirable, but his views of public opinion at that time are erroneous.

III.

On the 31st of March, 1814, the patriotism which was the offspring of the Liberty of 1792 was expiring in the breasts of the French people. They felt that the Empire was coming to an end, in spite of the heroic exploits of its head. I was alone at Milly. The prefect of Mâcon, an old friend of my father's, had appointed me mayor of that little borough, without considering my youth and inexperience. My duties consisted

in keeping order, and taking certain measures to levy contributions from the neighbouring villages to feed the bodies of Austrian and Italian troops by which we were already invaded. Fortunately this was managed without much difficulty. Marshal Augereau commanded at Lyons, and feebly strove to repulse the Austrian forces, who were masters of Mâcon, with a handful of French soldiers who had just returned from Spain. Mâcon was taken and retaken several times, and finally submitted to the Austrians.

I was present at several of these skirmishes on the neighbouring hills. Opinions were divided, between weariness of the Empire and pity for our brave fellow-countrymen, who were still shedding their blood like water for the Emperor and for France. Twice we advanced too far within the lines of the Spanish cavalry and the Hungarian grenadiers. I had my horse shot under me, and escaped with difficulty from the hands of the Austrians.

At last came the great battle, and the occupation of Paris by the Allied Armies, the

abdication of Napoleon at Fontainebleau, and the proclamation of Louis XVIII. The Empire crumbled into dust amidst the confused cries of a whole people, cries of wounded self-love and patriotism; and yet of renewed liberty and peace. I went to Lyons and witnessed this curious conflict of opinions, and the coalition, in the name of the Bourbons, between the Royalists and the Revolutionary party. The Buonapatists had disappeared as completely as if they had never existed. I was Royalist by inclination as well as by family tradition, and at once declared myself for the King.

The next day I started on horseback with the Chevalier de Pierreclos, whose old father fastened the white scarf across our shoulders with trembling joy, and sent us as scouts to see how the land lay.

We arrived towards evening at the little town of Cluny, in the midst of a number of people assembled in the public square, who might, if they chose, have turned against us for our seditious colours, as Paris had not yet declared itself, and the Emperor was

still at the head of his army at Fontainebleau. We rode boldly in amongst them, however, exclaiming, *Vive le Roi!* The crowd, which was composed of tradesmen and peasants, were at first mute from surprise and hesitation. Then they suddenly burst forth with cries of sympathy and joy at their deliverance from a yoke which had become insupportable. We got off our horses and mixed with the people, who welcomed us as liberators. Among such hundreds of men, not one lifted up his voice for the Emperor. Such was the popularity of the Empire at its decline. I do not pretend to praise their apparent fickleness; I only relate what happened. But I am writing the exact truth, and describing scenes in which I was both actor and witness.

IV.

In the evening we remounted our horses and went to sleep at the château of Cormatin, the home of the Chevalier de Pierreclos, who had married the beautiful daughter of the famous Désotteux de Cormatin, a Vendéean

general, noted for the treaty of peace he had concluded for the army of La Vendée, a treaty, be it said in passing, which he had taken upon himself to conclude without any extraneous authority.

General Désotteux had married a rich Mâconnaise widow, by whom he had had two beautiful girls. Madame la Comtesse de Pierreclos was the youngest and the handsomest. Her château was the rendezvous of the most agreeable persons in the county. I was invited there in common with all the other aristocratic and royalist families in the neighbourhood, and found it very pleasant. There was every description of sport, plenty of horses for riding or driving, an excellent cook, and all the pleasures of a *maison bien montée.* Politics soon became a leading feature in our conversations.

I have already said that we arrived at the castle towards evening, where we found a numerous and friendly gathering. We sat down to dinner and drank to the King and Liberty. 'Yes,' I exclaimed, 'our hopes spring from our very misfortunes. Let us

drink to the Bourbons, who are going to bring us back peace and freedom! As to myself, I know not what fate may be reserved for me; but whatever it may be, no joy can equal that which to-day's news has given me.' Every one cheered and declared that the upper classes were all of the same mind. During this political supper, the peasants in the villages lit bonfires of rejoicing on the hills, and in the magnificent grounds of the château.

V.

On my return to Mâcon I found my mother crying for joy, and the whole society of the place mad with excitement. Every one believed in the Bourbons as in the realisation of their dreams. They looked upon them as the panacea for all the ills which this unhappy year had brought upon France. Every one, however, did justice to the personal heroism of the Emperor Napoleon during this last campaign. The Empire had fallen, but the Emperor had risen in public estimation on the very ruins of his throne.

A short time after, I started for Paris with

all the youth of the country, whether noble or not, to enrol ourselves, though without any views of personal ambition, in the service of the King. To serve and defend the King, as the ruler spontaneously chosen by France, was our only object. What was curious in this movement was, that it infected at the same time every one capable of bearing arms, from Grenoble, Dauphiny, Lyons, Burgundy, and even as far as Dijon. Thus in a few days, led by the same feeling of enthusiasm, Virieu arrived; then D'Argout, who was afterwards finance minister; then M. de Marèste, who from his wit and ability is as great a favourite in Paris now at eighty years of age as he was at thirty; and a multitude of other young men, all distinguished in their different ways and all of the noblest blood in France. One and all burnt with the same sacred fire, and kindled the slumbering spark of royalty throughout the country. We took a species of little postchaise drawn by one horse, and changed from one town to the other, with the cry of '*Vive le Roi!*' Such was the enthusiastic pilgrimage of young France to Paris

at the dawn of the liberty which they dreamed secure under the new government.

My father, who had been wounded on the 10th of August, and who shared in our young illusions as we shared in his fidelity to his noble recollections, came to Paris himself a few days later. But not choosing to ask anything of the Court, which was overwhelmed with applications and promises, he let the flood of emigrants and ambitious placehunters rush by, and only came to express his devotedness to the cause, while he refused all pension or rank in the new army. Never did a father leave to a son a richer heritage of patriotism and noble disinterestedness.

As soon as he arrived, he presented me to the Prince de Poix, who commanded the company of Noailles. As the sole recompense for his long and faithful services, he only asked to matriculate his son in the King's Guard. I see the whole scene before me even now.

VI.

It was in the hotel of the Quay Malaquais, which was afterwards taken by the Duke

Decazes, minister of police. The Prince de Poix, who had been the great friend of Louis XVI., lived there at that time, and had turned the lower part of the house into a public office, for the formation of the new corps which he had at heart.

My father, who was a magnificent old man of sixty years of age, struck every one by his high-bred and martial appearance, which combined the simple dignity of his birth with the calm energy of one long used to command. To this was added the sort of plain frankness of a country gentleman, who had for many years laid down his sword, but whom patriotism had recalled to the service of his country. There was no anxious or ambitious expression on his face, mastering a feeling of joy at the crumbling of one dynasty, or the rise of another. My father was one of those who would never consent to emigrate. He considered that, as a loyal Frenchman, he was bound by a living vow to the national soil. The events of life never influenced his judgment. It was impossible to look at him and see in his face such a mixture of military

firmness, frankness, and sweetness, without being irresistibly attracted and drawn, as it were, towards him. It was the beauty of goodness: even to look at him seemed to make you a better man.

VII.

I followed him with some shyness through the great anterooms which led to the Prince's quarters. I wore, for the first time, a simple but elegant uniform, which yet rather drew attention to my youth and inexperience. My long sword, with its glittering scabbard, somewhat embarrassed my movements; I passed it under my left arm as a badge, of which I was certainly proud enough, but to which I was unaccustomed. Every one stared at me as I passed, which added to my confusion. I cast my eyes down to hide my awkwardness, when we suddenly saw a little old man coming towards us muffled up in a white swan-skin dressing gown and draggled trousers rolling over his ankles; with his hair badly combed and only half-powdered, falling all over his face. I asked myself who this little man could

be, who was so much at his ease in spite of his dress in the midst of a group of smart officers in full dress, covered with orders, when he suddenly came forward smiling towards us, with a face full of benevolent kindness.

Stopping all at once before my father, whose court dress, cross of St. Louis, jewelled sword, and noble bearing attracted everyone's observation, he seized me by the arm, looked at me with a smile of satisfaction, and then turning towards my father exclaimed, 'Sir, you are apparently the father of this young man, whom you are come to present to his general and companions, to form part of the new corps I am organising of faithful defenders of the King.'

My father replied with a kind of proud humility, 'that I was in truth his only son whom he had come to recommend to his care; that my name was Alphonse de Lamartine, and that I was not only his son, but the one remaining scion of a family who had always been devoted to the cause of the Bourbons; that nought but Royalist blood had coursed

through his veins since that fatal 30th of August, 1792, when he had come, at the head of the gentlemen of his province, to offer to defend the King, Louis XVI.; and that he remembered the Prince perfectly from having seen him on that memorable occasion.' But the Prince, after hearing my father's first few words, was no longer listening. Still looking at me, he took me by the hand, and leading me back to the apartments from which he had entered said, 'Come with me, young man, and let me present you to my staff.' I followed him from one office to another, till we came to a small room crammed full of officers. 'I bring you a new recruit, gentlemen,' he exclaimed pleasantly, presenting me to the one in command. 'You will allow that I have chosen well this time, and that we are in luck.' Then, to my confusion, he began enumerating my different military qualifications in a loud voice. 'What a capital figure for a uniform! March, sir—very well; you have an excellent military step. Enter his name at once, gentlemen,' he added. 'You will soon teach him his trade.' My father

was much moved and almost ashamed of the laudatory exclamations of the old general. It was not exactly what he expected from an old soldier, and in fact the Prince had become somewhat of a carpet knight.

This reception was passed on from one room to another, and I was in consequence received everywhere with open arms. This was my first campaign. My friends, when I repeated it to them, laughed as much as I did; but I was foolish enough to be vain of it, while it roused in me feelings of real gratitude towards the house of Noailles.

VIII.

This sort of reception awaited me each time that my father introduced me to his old friends and companions at arms.

M. Henrion de Pansey, my mother's cousin, was then provisional minister of justice. We used to spend our evenings at his house. The lady who did the honours of it was a young widow, Madame de Pré, and my first cousin, who afterwards married a General Pernetty, of the artillery. She was a clever and accomplished

woman and is still alive. My uniform was as popular there as at the old Prince de Poix's. M. Henrion de Pansey was the very soul of honour, and the pattern of a liberal royalist magistrate. There I found myself thrown with people of all kinds, and could glean the dominant opinions of the most eminent leaders of the day. General Carra St. Cyr, a relation as well as an old friend of my father's, who had been ill-used by the Emperor, showed us every species of kindness, and was not without some feeling of resentment against the injustice of Buonaparte. The beautiful and witty daughter of General Hoche, who had married my cousin the Count de Roys, was a link between us and the Republicans, who had become reconciled with the Bourbons. This friendship has lasted until now. Nothing is changed but the dates; and such changes only strengthen the feelings once engendered.

IX.

After leaving the Prince de Poix, my father took me to one of his old military

friends, the Marquis de Busseuil, major-general of the bodyguard.

He had lived for some time at Paray-le-Monial, the country of Marie Alacoque, whose name and holiness, ridiculed by Voltaire, had been the laughing-stock of the last century. The Marquis de Busseuil was not likely to vindicate her honour. He was a gentleman of the old school, leading a life the reverse of edifying, and who could only serve as a foil to his saintly neighbour. Under Louis XV. he would have found his place in the boudoir of Madame du Barry. But the return of the Bourbons made him keep within bounds, so as to obtain a restitution of his former rank and dignities. He received my father as an old friend and myself as his protégé. He was lodged under the roof of the palace, rather like a groom of the chambers in a great family, who is content with any accommodation provided he can serve his masters. The uniform he wore was sufficient to ennoble him in his own eyes. He proposed to my father to remind the King of the pension to which his long services and his zeal on the 10th of August en-

titled him. My father positively refused. He had simply done his duty, he said; and had followed his own honest convictions, without any thought of private interest. He did not choose to lower himself in his own esteem. He added: 'Those who served the King for pay may perhaps desire that it should be continued; but a pension would tarnish the honours of those who served him for conscience sake. I have no wish to purchase my joy at the return of the King; it is enough for me to see him once more in his proper place.'

These words sunk deep into my mind, and were a lesson to me for life. I knew better than anybody that my father was the reverse of rich; but he was a gentleman in the highest sense of the term; and he thus impressed upon me the feelings belonging to his rank.

X.

Either from the chance of service, or because the Prince de Poix had spoken of me to Louis XVIII., and wished to show the King a specimen of his newly-formed company, I received orders two days later to appear in

uniform at a given hour to attend the King in person. Louis XVIII. had not yet seen the artistic spoils which the Louvre at that time contained and which were exhibited to the French people as tokens of victory. He knew at what a price of blood and treasure, and likewise of injustice and violence, these *chefs d'œuvre* had become our property. But they were choice spoils which the peace had ratified, and which were still looked upon as trophies. The Allies had not yet had the time to reclaim them. They were, perhaps, afraid of marring the effect of their great victory and humbling France too much. Only Domenichino's *St. Jerome* had been restored to the King of Sardinia. The year 1814 had passed over these galleries in silence. Louis XVIII. wished to flatter his people, and, above all, to make himself popular by appearing to take a pride in our least legitimate conquests. He thought thereby to conciliate the Buonapartists, in compensation for the large portion of Europe which the Congress of Vienna had compelled him to restore.

He wished therefore, by a solemn and

official walk through the Louvre, publicly to enjoy these wonderful works of art now brought for the first time in review before a King of France and a successor to Francis I. He had another object in view also, which he was too wise to despise; and that was, to conciliate the liberal and artistic party whom the Emperor had put at the head of these national museums. It was an innocent concession to the spirit of the times; an adoption of one of the national glories, and a sort of mute guarantee to the somewhat anxious possessors of the property of the French *émigrés*. M. Denon and M. de Forbin, one a classic courtier, the other a chamberlain of the Emperor, were the two presidents of the Fine Arts Committee. To pay them a compliment was to soothe the feelings of Imperial France. He was determined not to miss the opportunity. It did not compromise him in any way, and it pleased the so-called Liberal party. The ceremony was, therefore, arranged with the utmost care and pomp.

XI.

M. Denon, a man of taste and wit, had allied himself, no one exactly knew how, to the Imperial party. He was very old and very ugly, but with a classical kind of ugliness, and extremely clever. His origin was unknown, or happily forgotten, amidst the confusion consequent on the rapidly changing current of men and things. He had made every one believe that he had been appointed by Louis XV. to some diplomatic post in Italy or elsewhere. It seemed hard to admit; but, then, talent excuses everything—no one took the pains to inquire, but simply believed his word. It acted as a kind of consecration from the old *régime*, and was ratified by the Empire. He had flattered the First Consul, and had followed him into Egypt with that so-called commission of *Savants* which the modern Alexander had had the cleverness to attach to his expedition; and he had written an account of it with great grace and spirit. On their return to France he did not fail to take advantage of this good fortune. He be-

came a senator through Napoleon's interest, and a director of the Museum through his own merit. He was a man who could accommodate himself with skilful cleverness to all parties and all circumstances; a courtier by nature; a man of pleasure too and frivolity; an Athenian of the times of Alcibiades; the Anacreon of ugliness in France—such was M. Denon. I had some connexion with him later on the subject of a celebrated beauty whom he won in spite of his advanced age, and whom Châteaubriand carried off in a like manner when his turn came. This lady is still alive. I never understood before how wit and cleverness could outweigh such ugliness and so many grey hairs!

XII.

M. le Comte de Forbin, father of the beautiful Countess de Marcellus, was, on the contrary, one of the most charming persons in France. He was equally happy with his pen and with his pencil. He wrote graceful novels, travels in which his genius rivalled that of Châteaubriand, and verses in which his gal-

lantry verged upon passion. His talent for painting was equally remarkable; his pictures reminded one of Claude Lorraine. As to his exterior, nature had bestowed upon him all she had refused to M. Denon; a noble bearing, a beautiful figure, grace and ease of manner, fine features, luxuriant hair, the sweetest smile; nothing was wanting to this man save perhaps that quality which is of all others the rarest — being perfectly natural. I had a feeling sometimes that all this beauty and talent were put on; but, in spite of that, it was very difficult not to be fascinated by him.

XIII.

My companion and I were placed on either side of the wheel-chair, pushed by two footmen, which was to be the moving throne of the King. I was to the left, my comrade to the right, with our swords drawn. The royal progress was to be too long and too slow for the gouty limbs of the King to bear on foot. We started through the long galleries which join the Tuileries to the Louvre. A crowd of courtiers and noblemen followed in silence.

They all seemed to me to have that sort of look and set smile which people put on at court as they do their uniforms. M. de Blacas, the favourite minister of the King's household, walked nearest to the Prince, and explained to him as he went along the various treasures which the Emperor had accumulated. As for myself, at first I saw nothing, so dazzled was I at the royal pomp and the majestic figure of the King, with whom I for the first time found myself brought in such close contact. He was to me neither hero nor soldier, simply 'the King;'—a king who had presided in Parliament, and who formed part of the state; a king who had sometimes approved of, sometimes criticised M. Necker; a king who had heard Mirabeau toll the funeral knell of the monarchy; a king who had sometimes been the friend, sometimes the adversary, of Marie Antoinette; a king who had escaped from his palace the very day when his brother, Louis XVI., had been brought back to the Tuileries to die under the axe of his own subjects; a king who had come back to that very palace to reign instead of the Emperor.

I heard nothing till we got to the Picture Gallery but the monotonous, respectful tread of those men who had served both dynasties, walking before and behind as courtiers of two centuries.

XIV.

But all of a sudden, a wonderful voice, soft and firm at the same time, like a voice which had coaxed men more than intimidated them, and which wished more than ever to please the ears of its hearers, roused me from my dreamy retrospect. It seemed to me as if I were listening to a voice of the past, formed by the habit of adversity of so many years' standing, coming forth from a breast which had been long silent, and speaking to men from the height of a throne.

'Let us stop here, gentlemen, and look around us, for I am not come here as to a rapid military review, but to see and admire what you have had the happiness of admiring before me. Now look here,' he added in a lower voice to M. Denon and M. de Forbin; 'you who are familiar with these art marvels,

come and show them to me. I love Art in all its branches, and esteem all who make it their profession. Tell us to stop before all the best pictures, and don't leave out any, for I love glory too, especially when it reflects upon France. Talent is a dynasty which has no usurpers.'

A murmur of admiration ran through the Court. M. Denon and M. de Forbin were beckoned on each side of the royal arm-chair, M. de Blacas yielding his place to them.

XV.

I then saw a little old man with a forehead in which art had in vain endeavourcd to efface the wrinkles, draw near to the King, and say a few indistinct words in his ear, all the while pressing his senator's hat to his breast. The King looked at him from head to foot with the superiority of eternal youth, and pointed out a remarkable sketch, which his experienced eye told him was that of a firstrate master, asking him at the same time the name of the painter. M. Denon being unable to satisfy him at once, he appealed

to M. de Forbin. The difference was between a courtier of Cleopatra and of Alexander. The King appeared struck by it, and kept him for a long time by his side, listening to his observations. Whilst M. de Forbin was speaking and the King was listening, and giving little signs of approbation from time to time, I had then a good opportunity of looking at the monarch myself. I do not know whether I was more pleased or surprised. To be just towards him, one must forget Béranger and *La Minerve*, the two caricaturists of the Bourbons at that time. Disparagement is not truth. I am now going to give you an exact portrait of Louis XVIII.

People called him an old man; but he was not so. His vigorous and manly figure rose above the crowd of ministers, marshals, and artists, as if to impel them to admiration rather than obedience. His blue dress had nothing to distinguish it but the military epaulet. This was a compliment to the army, which had nothing ridiculous about it except to the eyes of the fanatics for the long grey great coat and straight collar. Any man of

sense would at once perceive in this costume the modesty of a wise man who did not wish to usurp the glory of his predecessor, yet was bound to appear as the sovereign of a military people. A white waistcoat with a sky-blue ribbon across it, which was the order of chivalry of his family, marked his birth, and identified him with his nobles. His gouty knees were covered with the trappings of his horse, like a sign of peace to reassure Europe and his people.

As to his head, I have seen thousands of men in my life, and never saw any countenance which corresponded so well to the idea of one sent by Providence to fill the place of sovereign to a people whom a hero had compromised and lost by a series of hazardous battles, and who had been called to the throne to re-establish peace and order. There was neither pride nor insolence in his face. One felt that he reigned because it was his proper place; he honoured those who had served his rival, but he reigned because it was his divine right to be king over France. He was, in fact, the exponent of Legitimacy, and ruled

by the force of right alone. No one could reproach him for ambition. Europe and France had unanimously pointed to him with the words: 'Thou art the man!' and he had answered, 'Here I am.' He had come without drawing the sword or shedding a drop of his people's blood. The words, '*I pity, I forget, I forgive,*' were his only war-cry.

XVI.

Those noble words were written without affectation in his clever mouth, his graceful manner, and his benevolent look. His eyes, which were the colour of the blue sky after a storm, were the finest I ever saw. They had the gentle pride of a man born to the purple, and yet the calm tranquillity of a patience which was ready to wait, but which never doubted. It was the royalty of Nature. These eyes looked as if they were made of China and *lapis lazuli.* All the blood of his ancestry seemed to be revealed in them as in a mirror. They never kindled with anger, nor fell from timidity. They were the eyes of a king who sees everything,

understands everything, and judges every thing with serenity and calm.

But this apparent quiet had nothing of the impassable indifference of the Homeric 'Juno with the ox eyes.' It revealed, on the contrary, abundant intelligence and understanding of hidden motives and intentions. Royalty, revolution, misfortune, exile—he had passed through all. There was a something in his look which seemed to know or to guess everything; but he was careful not to reveal his thoughts. To be silent, and yet with an expressive silence which is at once understood—this was the eloquence of the King. It was especially through his eyes that he spoke, to the highest as to the lowest, for he neglected no one, and by his look apostrophised each one in turn. I felt myself, standing as I did for four hours by his side, that he knew all about me, that he had been told my history; and a smile of intelligence lit up his face as he looked from time to time at his young guards, whose appearance evidently pleased him. In spite of the respect which forbade my giving expression to the

least sign of approbation or disapprobation of the royal speeches (when I was only permitted to assume the mechanical attitude of a living piece of furniture), yet nature was stronger in me than etiquette, and an almost imperceptible movement of the eyes or lips showed now and then an admiration which I could not conceal, and which pleased the King the more as it was involuntary. At intervals his ready smile responded; he felt himself understood; it was the flattering and mutual surprise of royalty on the one hand and obscurity on the other. His eyes sought my face several times as if to glean this mute homage. Years after I knew, through one of his ministers, that he had remembered this day, when, in 1820, my name came before him as that of a poet, and when he sent me a complete edition of the poets of Greece and Rome. He thought himself an Augustus discovering a Virgil. I was flattered, but not dazzled; it was not the fault of the King, but of the times.

This official promenade lasted for hours, which, however, seemed to me only too short. Every one had had the right word and the

right look. M. Denon and M. de Forbin were swelling with importance. I went back modestly to my place with my comrades, and slept, as those on guard always did, on one of the straw mattresses in the antechamber.

XVII.

This was the only time when I saw the King close except once, when I accompanied him on horseback as an equerry by the side of his carriage, in the neighbourhood of Auteuil and St. Cloud. He liked going at a great pace to get that amount of movement and air which his gout precluded him from taking in any other way; so much the worse for those whose horses slipped up in the sharp turns on the Paris pavement; that was the only danger of this duty.

Sometimes, at the Tuileries, I saw the Duc d'Angoulême, a prince with too much reserve to conciliate public affection; or the Duc de Berri, who was too confiding; or the Comte d'Artois, a good man but too much impressed with the divine right of kings; or the Duc d'Orleans, too cringing

a courtier within the walls of the palace, and too popular without; one or other of whom always accompanied the King to the chapel. Very often we met the Duchesse d'Angoulême, walking slowly, with red eyes, through the rooms of the palace, without thinking of popularity, but keeping back her tears, not to wound by her filial sorrow those who had witnessed the death of her father and mother. At other times I followed, with a corps of the bodyguard, the covered and sealed baskets which contained the breakfast or dinner of the King, so that poison should not be thrown into the dishes; and it was my duty to see those baskets opened, and their contents placed on the table of the royal family and their guests. Louis XVIII. had the reputation of being a gourmand; in reality he was only a delicate eater. The conversation at those little dinners was easy, witty, and agreeable, especially when the King himself spoke: it was a direct contradiction to the orgies which calumny attributed to the Court out of doors. Fancy an orgie of any sort at a table where the orphan

of the Temple was seated, which was blessed by a bishop, and at which an infirm French king presided with open doors! There might have been licence in the streets; but decency and religion, and the remembrance of a deep sorrow, reigned within the walls of the palace. This is the simple truth.

XVIII.

After my turn of waiting was over, which lasted several weeks, my father left me, and I went into garrison at Beauvais, which was the quarters of the Noailles Company. I determined, however, not to live the ordinary barrack life of idleness and licence, which was the fashion of young men of my class at that time in France. I was sad enough at heart since my return from Naples and the death of Graziella. I brought with me several serious books, among the rest, the lives of Bossuet and Fénélon, a new edition of which had just been published, which I left afterwards in my Beauvais lodgings, and perhaps they are there still.

I led a solitary and almost ascetic life,

quite to myself, at a little grocer's in the Faubourg d'Amiens, who let her rooms to the officers of the garrison. Her husband was dead, and trade bad. This poor widow, who was already of a certain age, lived (with a young servant) on the letting of her humble lodgings. I established myself there; and, to avoid the noise and distraction of the table d'hôte, I proposed to her to cook for me, and bring me up my simple meals in my own room. Thanks to this economical arrangement, my allowance of 50*l.* a year from my father, with my pay, amply sufficed for all my wants.

XIX.

I lived like this for three months, getting up at five o'clock every morning to go to the manège. My passion for horses and the habit of riding from a child at my father's, made this the pleasantest exercise of the day. After my second lesson in the riding school, I was put at the head of the squadron. My companions liked me, and I was never thrown or unseated even by the most vicious animals. Once or twice I went into the café of my corps

on leaving the manège. A pretty woman served behind the counter, and reproached me for my rare appearance in the coffee room. I answered civilly but avoided her advances, and kept myself strictly out of the way of temptation, however agreeable. The remembrance of Graziella was my safeguard. By degrees I made acquaintance with several of the corps about my own age, whom my quiet and retiring habits had interested. Among these was M. de Vaugelas, a young gentleman from Dauphiny, whose tastes in all ways coincided with my own. He was one of the most accomplished men I ever knew. He was a strong Royalist, as we all were, and loved solitude as much as I did. The duty of the day once over, he fled from the frivolity of the crowd around us. Thus he came to seek me out, and I to receive him with joy. Our intimacy soon attracted other men to us of the same stamp. After a little time we formed a distinguished society of our own in the garrison, which, however, excited no one's envy. My room was often the place of meeting, and we discussed literature, philosophy, and poetry; for many of us

were poets as well as soldiers, and it was at Beauvais that I first began to compose the verses which afterwards brought me into notice. My hostess (both mistress and servant) had a kind of deference towards me, as my friends were noted as superior to all others of their age. But this agreeable society did not prevent my seeking daily the melancholy pleasure of a more complete solitude, which from my childhood until now has been a sort of necessity of my existence. Nothing is worth an hour's quiet communing with oneself. It was in the country that I sought and found it. There was not much beauty there certainly, but it was solitary; there were not many fine trees or beautiful flowers; but there was God and His works, and that was enough.

XX.

At the end of that part of the town where I lived there was a steep and barren hill, frequented by few, save on the occasion of the annual fairs, the road over which led to Amiens. Its sandy peak reminded me of those desert tracts which you come upon outside the

Arab cities in the unfrequented regions of the East. One or two poor huts, scattered here and there, cropped up like mushrooms between this arid road and the town. A few puffs of dust rising and falling again on the dry soil, revealed from time to time a patient donkey or a solitary diligence, slowly winding up the steep ascent on the way to Amiens. They were the only signs of life I ever met with on this road, and they were few and far between. This dulness and absence of trees deterred any one from choosing this path for pleasure's sake. On the other side of Beauvais were green woods, and fertile valleys bordered with willows, through which were pleasant walks, the resort of the workmen and young girls, who on Sundays and Feast Days rejoiced with their parents to exchange their stuffy dwellings, infected with the smell of hides and tanning, for the pure sweet air of these flower-covered meadows and shady trees. But no one came near my barren hill. A leper-house might have been placed there; it would only have needed the lepers!

XXI.

Well, in spite of its unattractive features, it was up this very hill that every day, after my frugal dinner, with a book under my arm and a pencil in my pocket, I walked to find a more complete and uninterrupted solitude than in my own room. At home there was the servant girl carrying away the plates, and her mistress spinning in the parlour below, and the flies buzzing in the windows—all the ordinary home-like sounds, in fact, of every day life; but they were more than I could bear. I would rather have heard the rustling of the insects in the churchyard; but what I craved for was positive silence, that real proof of solitude, and I only found it on this dreary hill-side.

XXII.

After having walked for about a quarter of an hour up this steep and dusty road, I came to a dry, thorny hedge, very high and very thick, the only entrance to which was closed by a handful of still dryer thorns, fastened by

a stake to the ground. I had learnt how to displace and replace this barrier.

Behind the hedge a low vine, rarely visited by its proprietor, spread its branches over the arid soil. A little further on, a kind of furrow, on either side, enabled the vinedresser to prune or gather the fruit, by creeping, like a child, through a low and narrow path. By following this alley the thick leaves of the vine completely hid you from the eyes of the passers-by (should any such be found) on the high road. On no single occasion, however, did I ever meet a labourer in this vineyard. In this country, where the vine is rarely pruned, and the grass grows freely between the stocks, the ivy is left to grow or die as it will. The vigour of the vine itself is enough to protect the fruit.

When I had once discovered this vineyard (which I loved the very first day from its leaves, and flowers, and smells reminding me of Milly), I chose it for my retreat; and every day, as soon as I had finished my dinner, I went there as if by instinct, just as the lizard, when the sun comes out, starts forth

from among the stones in the wall. I used to put aside the thorny hedge, displace the wooden stake, replace it all behind me, so that no one should guess that any stranger had passed that way, and then seek the little low, narrow path of which I have just spoken. I used to walk about a hundred yards in silence, and then came to the hollow formed by the furrows, and shaded by the vine leaves, where I had made myself a little seat, invisible to all eyes. What did I want more ? Would a fine park, or a forest, have given me greater pleasure ? Had I not silence, warmth, shade, and loving recollections of my childhood, which were worth all the rest? I used to gather the leaves round me, breathing in their sweet aromatic smell, and wished for nothing else on earth. Sometimes the shade of Graziella under the vines of Ischia came before me, and heavy tears fell on my open book. O ! memory of times gone by! Hours when the clock of life seems to stand still, and one tries to believe that the stream will no longer run by so swiftly! How sweet those hours were to me day by day, stolen, as it were,

from everyone, and even from myself! They must have made a deep impression upon me, since, after all these years of absence and change, I remember every twig of this vine-yard as clearly as if I had been there yesterday.

These hours, in fact, were spent by me either in sorrowful remembrance of the past and in tears, as a well-known face seemed to rise up before me which was engraven for ever in my heart; or in writing disconnected verses to her memory, in which my grief was mingled with remorse; or in dreaming of the future, on the threshold of which I was then standing.

When the sun sunk lower, and the clock of the beautiful cathedral of Beauvais struck four, which was the hour of the evening drill, I rose, wiped my eyes, put my book and my pencil in my pocket, and went to where the drum was beating to quarters for the musketry instruction, which I never neglected, hoping thereby to make myself some day of use to the King, whose devoted servant I was.

XXIII.

In this way the three months of barrack life at Beauvais passed away ; and then I got leave. I returned to Paris, and started for Mâcon. I own to having felt very proud of my martial apprenticeship, and still more vain of my uniform. I was longing to show myself to the young men and young women of my own neighbourhood in my military dress. My hopes were not disappointed; every one said I was quite another man. I was the object of general attention, and even touched a few hearts. The only thing that troubled me was a murmur of opposition against the new dynasty which seemed to be grumbling around me, and which filled me with some bitterness. I thought the French people insupportably fickle to have passed in a few months from disgust at the Empire and fanaticism for the Bourbons, to caricaturing Louis XVIII. as too pacific a monarch to suit them. I was hurt at seeing several old officers on half-pay, more popular in the cafés and the

streets than we of the new *régime.* However, I did not at the time foresee that any serious events would trouble the future; so I gave myself up without reserve to the enjoyment of a brilliant winter without any sinister anticipations of evil.

A young gentleman and lady, M. and Madame Germain, kept open house at the Prefecture with all the luxury which a large fortune could give. M. Germain had been chamberlain to Napoleon, and had been overwhelmed with imperial favours. Madame Germain was the daughter of that Countess d'Houdetot, whom the passion of J. J. Rousseau had immortalised without tarnishing her good name.

Young, tall, well made, and thoroughly amiable in character, she was a great favourite with my mother, to whose house she came constantly with a loving and winning familiarity. She had everything which would have attracted me also, if she had not been already united to one of the most excellent of men. These two loved each other as such a husband and wife were sure to do. I could

not help admiring her; but it was without envy or jealousy. If I had been J. J. Rousseau, I should have had a hopeless passion for her, but I was as careful and reserved as she was good and pure. She was to me like a holy picture. I believe she is still alive, but I have never tried to see her again. Her husband, who adored and was really worthy of her, died not very long after, in the prime of life. She went sadly mourning for the rest of her days.

XXIV.

All of a sudden, in the midst of our fêtes, and without any previous warning, the great and astounding news arrived:—'*The Emperor has escaped from Elba, and is marching with a handfull of troops across the mountains to Grenoble.*'

There was great amazement but no panic. His abdication at Fontainebleau was too recent. The Congress of Vienna was still sitting; the Allied Armies were not yet disbanded; France had scarcely had time yet to be disgusted with peace and the Bourbons. Buonaparte

had mistaken the hour. No one expected him, and few wished for him. His coming was out of place; there was no question of him. Even his army had ceased to think of him. This was the general feeling. I own that, as far as I was concerned, so far from believing in his success, I was rejoiced at his rashness. 'He is about to accomplish what the treaty of Paris only did by halves,' I said,—'the *dethronement* of his glory.'

XXV.

We remained in this state for several days, always imagining that the Government would act on the defensive; that Buonaparte disconcerted at his reception, would have recrossed the Alps into Italy, that he was going to join and be reconciled to Murat, and that the battle would be fought on the plains between Turin and Milan. It is rare that a man gains, towards the evening of his life, the Marengo of the early morning. We took it for granted that he would be defeated, and that Europe would have little trouble and little glory in triumphing over a ruined man.

My first idea had been to start for Paris so as to be ready to join my corps there. Then I thought that the King would perhaps join us at Lyons, to fight the Emperor in the Valley of Dauphiny if he persisted in his march; and I resolved to stay where I was, and await further orders. I remained, in consequence, ready to start at a moment's notice; but no orders came. At the end of six days, we heard that Labédoyère had rejoined the Emperor at some leagues from Grenoble; that the King's army had disbanded itself at the mere shadow of Napoleon's name; that Grenoble had opened its gates; that a large body of troops were gathering there round his standard; and that he was marching upon Lyons.

At Lyons, the Comte d'Artois, the Duke of Orleans, and Marshal Macdonald had been abandoned by the troops, and seditiously pursued on the road to Paris. At Lons-le-Saunier Marshal Ney had given it up. The Paris road was open. No orders came from the King; one felt one must go and seek them.

I started on horseback with the Chevalier

de Pierreclos, and we determined to take a cross road which would lead us quicker to our destination. At a few miles from Mâcon we met Colonel Duluat, a great friend of ours and aide-de-camp to Marshal Suchet. He stopped us exclaiming, 'Well! where is he?' 'At Lyons,' we replied, 'and marching upon Paris.' 'Upon Paris!' he retorted, with a wild joy which he did not attempt to repress. 'Well done! *Vive l'Empéreur*!' and digging his spurs into his horse he set off as hard as he could go towards Mâcon. 'See what the army is!' I exclaimed to my companion. 'It begins with a little indecision, and then becomes as mad as Duluat!' We could not help making some rather bitter reflections. 'It is no use fighting against popularity and glory,' I continued. 'The army has no right to rise against the country, against liberty, against our solemn oaths, against the very people from whom they spring! But you will see what has happened here will happen elsewhere. We who have our honour to think of, let us go forward!' And we galloped on towards Paris.

At the beginning of the line of mountains where the Charolais diligence conveyed its passengers from Moulins to Paris, we left our horses, and took our places in this primitive conveyance. My journey had nothing remarkable about it save a sword-thrust which I inflicted on a young Polish officer in the garden of the hotel, who had been sent to corrupt the troops, and whom I reproached for meddling with things which did not concern him, as he was not even a Frenchman. They carried him to his bed wounded in the chest, and we, delighted to have thus got rid of him, made the best of our way to Nemours. Here a good many of the officers of the King's household joined us, and we travelled together in a coach. My sword-thrust and Royalist feelings won me golden opinions, and we arrived almost gaily at Paris.

XXVI.

The town was in a strange state of dumb consternation, like a place where there is but one feeling.

I went to lodge at a little inn which I

knew, and which still exists, called the Hôtel du Hazard, Rue du Hazard. My landlady assured me that the Court was determined to fight in the plains of Villejuif, with the King's household, the musketeers, the body-guards, and the whole population of Paris. On hearing these words, I felt as if I had found France again. The cries of *Vive le Roi*! which followed Louis XVIII. to the Chamber of Deputies the next day, seemed to me like the oath of the whole nation. I began again to have hope and confidence, and rejoined my corps, whom I found full of zeal, and willing, like me, to die at their posts for the King. The enthusiasm was general. Paris would be buried under her own ruins rather than yield. *Two or three hundred thousand men*, we said, would swallow up the military mob of the Elba exile! Fidelity to the Court spread through the whole population. Every one enrolled himself as a volunteer, and was ready to fight. The young men at the different colleges were armed under the direction of M. Odilon Barrot. The workmen were anxious to fight for peace. Women of

all ranks cheered us on in this heroic defence of justice and right. Unfortunately, enthusiasm is not discipline, and Buonaparte was steadily advancing.

XXVII.

The day came when were to meet him at Villejuif, and there were already neither soldiers nor leaders. The Court was quickly preparing for a retreat; we would not believe it. We passed the night armed, lying at our horses' feet, in our quarters, and expecting every moment the orders which never came. At twelve o'clock they led us to the Champ-de-Mars; at six o'clock we were brought back to the Place de la Concorde. We remained there in battle array till ten o'clock at night. At midnight we were ordered to move quietly to the boulevard by the Rue de Richelieu.

Nothing can paint the despair of the people when they saw, through the glimmering darkness, that the last defenders of the King were leaving the city. The inhabitants were crying at their doors; their wives and children

brought us wine and food; our own tears fell, while consternation filled every breast; curses on the Emperor echoed from house to house, and we ourselves knew not where we were going. At last we were ordered to halt before a barrack, in a great square full of troops, at St. Denis. We resumed our march at five o'clock in the morning. The King's carriage had passed us amidst the silence of the night, and had taken the route to Lille. We understood at once that he had determined to yield to the Emperor without striking a blow. The Maréchal Marmont, with about twenty general officers, on horseback, mingled with our ranks. The Comte d'Artois, the Duke d'Angoulême, and the Duke de Berri, marched sadly at a little distance under an incessant fine rain. No one spoke. The pride of France was humbled to the dust. This universal desertion of a great cause was best expressed by a solemn silence. I was very young at the time, but I really felt as if the weight of twenty revolutions lay on my heart. 'What is the meaning of the people's rights?' I said to myself. 'Here

is a king, after twenty years of exile, recalled to the throne by his people to save the country; who accepts this abandoned throne without bitterness; a king, to whom his people, in spite of the little weaknesses of his age, are bound by the three strongest feelings of the human heart—justice, gratitude, and hope. A soldier, who has lost, by his own fault, the throne which he had justly or unjustly possessed, wearied of his idleness in an island, takes advantage of the handful of men left him, arms and leads them on to attack this new power in France. The consciences of men are roused—still he marches on;—all Europe protests—still he marches on. The love of peace, of commerce, of industry, of property,—all rises against him. But nothing arrests his relentless course. The King whom he is about to attack, trusts to the army, which only a few weeks ago had received him, like the people, with acclamation; the army deserts him in a mass, and the people, seized with terror, yield to force and join in the general defection. Of what use are professions of faith or fidelity? The man is everything!

France is ready again to immolate herself on a military altar! Try and talk to them now of peace, or liberty, or virtue! Liberty means the sword; Virtue, to be once more enslaved under the heel of the conqueror!'

XXVIII.

These were my thoughts as I followed my column sadly and silently through the Flanders' mud, and under the freezing March rain; while the Marshal who commanded us rode on doggedly, with an expression of disdain and indifference; and the Duc de Berri, wrapped up in his waterproof cloak, went up and down our ranks, endeavouring to cheer us now and then with a few grateful and kind words. But the people in the provinces wept at the doors of their cottages as we passed by.

After marching a few leagues on the road to Lille, we suddenly received an unexpected counter-order. We retraced our steps to take a branch road leading to Béthune. It was the King himself who had sent us this counter-order from Lille. He had found there the

Duke of Orleans and the Maréchal Mortier, with 10,000 or 12,000 of the Emperor's army, who were still hesitating between fidelity and defection. They would not allow us to enter the gates of Lille. The Marshal said he could not answer for the conduct of the troops if the bodyguard of the King followed him into the citadel. The Duke of Orleans, who did not wish to compromise himself with Buonaparte or his troops, was already negotiating a departure for London. The King resolved to quit Lille and to take refuge in Belgium. This was the secret of the counter-order which we had received, and which we could not understand. I fell ill in a poor little hut by the road-side. It was only a slight attack of fever. The care taken of me by the kind inhabitants of this cottage was what they would have shown to their own son; and the mother and daughter took it by turns to watch by my bedside. In a day or two I was quite cured, and my horse, who had benefited as much by the rest as myself, soon enabled me to rejoin my column. Towards evening we arrived at Béthune. To

the right we saw bodies of cavalry commanded by Excelmans, an intrepid general as well as diplomatist, watching us from the woods, and following us at a certain distance. His orders were to keep us in sight without fighting. The Emperor did not choose to fire a shot first against the King of France. He wanted to be able to say to Europe, 'I have restrained every species of violence. France calls me, and I come. Where then is my crime ?'

XXIX.

Our entrance into Béthune, the gates of which were immediately closed upon us, was effected amidst some confusion. Excelmans' cavalry regiments had made a circuit round the town, and were waiting for us at the opposite gate. A shot was fired by accident. The horse which the Count d'Artois rode gave a sudden start, and nearly threw his rider, who was, however, a first-rate horseman. I saw this brother of Louis XVIII. spring suddenly upwards with the rearing of his horse, which looked as if he had been hit by the shot; but

it was not so. The beast took the bit between his teeth, and galloped off outside the town, with the Duc de Berry and Marshal Marmont at his heels. A regiment of the Grenadier Guards followed; two regiments of the Imperial army, Lancers and Carabineers, were ranged in battle array at 200 paces off, in a menacing but undecided attitude.

The Duc de Berry advanced alone and spoke to them. 'Fire, if you dare, on the brother and the nephew of your King; or go back, and have the decency, at least, to respect misfortune.'

On hearing the Prince's words they retired accordingly, and left the road open for us to Armentières, by which we might enter Belgium. The Count d'Artois, the Duc de Berry, and Marshal Marmont re-entered Béthune. We could hardly satisfy the hospitality of the people, who all pressed food, lodging, and stabling on our little troop of men and horses. I went to a blacksmith's who had a large shop full of workmen in the principal square of the town. They lavished upon us everything that was necessary for

man and beast. We drank with our hosts to the health of the King, and felt that their hearts were entirely with us.

XXX.

After resting and refreshing ourselves, we went out to stroll in the 'Place' at Béthune, to talk over the events of the day. The Royal Princes desired our pay to be distributed amongst us with their last words of thanks and acknowledgments. 'We are going beyond the frontiers of France,' they said, 'and do not ask you to accompany us further. We know too well the consequences and cost of emigration to press upon you to adopt it. We have nothing to offer you but what awaits ourselves. Where the soil of our country ends, therefore, stop and leave us.'

On hearing these words, opinions were divided among us. My mind was made up. It was the first time I had had the courage to speak in public. My adversary was the nephew of M. Royer Collard, a young man who felt and argued hotly on all subjects. He spoke well, and won all hearts to his views.

But I fought against his proposal with all the energy of which I was capable. 'To emigrate,' I said, 'is to declare ourselves defeated on the soil we are bound to defend. We are more useful to the King's cause in the country itself than in following his fortunes as soldiers in a strange land. It is by the force of public opinion that we shall win, and not by arms.'

Five or six of our company insisted on following the King into Belgium; but the rest of us remained behind. A few moments later a proclamation was read, announcing that we were all to be disbanded, and that, in virtue of a convention entered into by the generals on both sides, we were to return unarmed to the bosom of our families. Until Béthune was evacuated, however, we were to guard her gates.

I and about twenty of my comrades were to have charge of the Paris gate, and prevent the enemy's force from entering the town before the day stipulated in the convention.

After two or three nights passed in this manner, we heard some one knocking at the

gates under cover of the darkness. A voice cried out, 'Is there an officer here named Lamartine?' 'Yes,' was the reply. 'Well; tell him that an officer of Hussars, named Descrivieux, wishes to speak to him.' I was summoned; Captain Descrivieux was admitted, and we embraced each other cordially. 'I am come to fetch you,' he said. Descrivieux was an amiable young man from Bourg en Bresse, a relation and friend of my family's, whom I had left at Mâcon a few days before the 20th of March, and whom the defection of his regiment had compelled to follow the cause of the Emperor in spite of his own opinions. He belonged to Excelmans' corps of cavalry. 'Follow me,' he said, 'your duty is accomplished. I will give you a tradesman's disguise, a horse, and money to get back to Paris. You must not wait till the regular disbanding of the King's troops has scattered them all over the country, for they would, of course, be looked upon with suspicion by the Emperor's forces, and your return would be both dangerous and difficult. Your mother put you specially under my charge; so come along directly.'

I did not hesitate, and followed my guide through the faubourg of Béthune. He bought me a capital horse from the stables of the Prince de Condé, whose accoutrements and bridle were still marked with his cypher. I exchanged my own clothes for those of a horsedealer in the neighbourhood, which disguised me completely, and, after having wished Captain Descrivieux an affectionate farewell, I rode off, with a jockey's whip at my wrist and a pair of pistols in my portmanteau. 'God protect you,' exclaimed my friend; 'and remember me to Madame de Lamartine.' 'We are sure to meet one another again in life.' I did meet him often in after-life, and, at last, as a colonel of Hussars, beloved, and deservedly so, by his whole regiment. Waterloo had spared him. His had been one of the twelve regiments whom Grouchy, unjustly accused, had brought back to Liège. He had a prosperous and happy life, and died two years ago, always gay and good and bright, and always a devoted friend. Were all the world to forget him, I should ever deplore his loss, and remember his kindness to me at the little garrison of Béthune.

XXXI.

Nothing happened to me on the road. My childish face was rather inappropriate to my pretended trade; but the troubles which filled every heart in the rear of the great army were my best protection. Moreover, the good people of the North of France would have died sooner than betray a friend of the King's.

I had a return of fever on arriving at Abbeville. I remember the great Hôtel de l'Europe, where I had lodged before, and, dismounting, I gave my horse to the ostler and asked for a bed. The mistress of the house and her three charming daughters, seeing that I was tired and sick, showed me into a most comfortable apartment; they directly saw through my horsedealer's disguise, and treated me as a young man of good family. The doctor came and said that all I wanted was rest. For several days I was nursed by these good people with a tender care of which I was really ashamed. The political state of the horizon seemed to have

redoubled their natural kindness. My own mother and sisters could not have looked after me better. They always opposed my departure. At last, I had no excuse for remaining. I told them my name. They did not own to having recognised me till that avowal could only add to their kindness. They would not hear of any payment for their hospitality. 'Allow us, sir,' they exclaimed, 'to consider ourselves your hostesses and not your servants; we can only beg of you to keep a place for us in your remembrance. Wherever the King is loved you will find friends.'

I promised I would not forget them as long as I lived, and I have kept my word. May Abbeville always contain such good and loyal hearts! Gratitude is like friendship, and takes no note of time.

XXXII.

When I arrived near Paris, I began to reflect on the way I should manage to get into the town without exciting suspicion. I wrote to a good fellow named Michonnet, who let out horses and carriages in the Rue

St. Marc, an old Vendean hero, whose body had been riddled with shot in the days when people fought for their opinions. I had known Michonnet during my first visit to Paris, and had made acquaintance with his wife, who was as good and loyal as himself. He used to let me have horses and carriages on hire, and would even lend me money at a pinch. I wrote to him explaining my position, and telling him that I should arrive on such a day at St. Denis with a fine horse. I implored him to come and fetch me himself in his gig, with a groom to take my horse, and to let me lodge for a night or two at his house. I arrived towards evening at St. Denis, and found that he had arranged everything according to my suggestion. I took his groom's place in the gig by his side, the groom riding my horse, and so we entered Paris without the least difficulty or suspicion. He took me to my old quarters in the Hôtel du Hazard. My landlady gave me a graphic picture of the state of Paris. I wanted to remain here privately for some days. Every one who had belonged to the household of Louis XVIII. had been forbidden

to stop in Paris; but I reckoned on getting out of the city as I had entered it, through the ready wit and good-nature of Michonnet.

After having, accordingly, stopped a week there, and been witness to the scandalous scenes in the theatre (when the Bourbons were given up to the coarse raillery of the dregs of the people to please the conqueror of Elba), I left it, as I had come, by the intervention of Michonnet, and mounted the same horse which had brought me to Paris. I had an uncle, whom I have before mentioned, a venerable ecclesiastic, who had given up his ministerial employments, and lived in a beautiful and solitary château in the forest in the neighbourhood of Dijon. He was my father's favourite brother and most intimate friend, and I wrote to say I was coming, and that I felt it would be to a second father. I took the least frequented roads towards Burgundy; but I found the people far less Royalist than those of the North. The cries of *Vive l'Empéreur*! met me on all sides, with menacing looks and provocations to insult, even from the peasants who were working in the fields

or mowing the meadows by the roadside. Sometimes the cry varied to *Vive la Mort!* But I went quickly on my way, only chewing the cud of bitter reflections.

At Châtillon-sur-Seine, however, on climbing the hill which led to the town, I felt I could not resist driving back those who were pursuing me with such gratuitous insults. I had a little sword-stick which hung on my wrist by a leathern strap, and I drew the sword, galloping after them for a few seconds with the naked blade. They all took to flight, and hid themselves in the vineyards. I put back my sword in the scabbard and walked on. But my impatient movement had broken the stick and the sword alone remained in my hand. Fortunately I found it out on crossing the little bridge which led into the town, and hastened to get rid of my sword by throwing it into the stream below the bridge. I went on my way quietly, not thinking I had been observed, and stopped at a little inn in the centre of the town to ask for some dinner. I saw that my horse was well cared for, and then sat down to dine. Hardly was I seated,

however, than a captain of the National Guard came into the room and asked me what was the arm I had thrown away in the stream. I saw that I was discovered, and felt that it would be wiser to tell the truth, that my sword having slipped out of its sheath, I thought it was safer to throw it away rather than compromise myself by wearing it thus through the town. The captain saw directly with whom he had to deal, and that I was not a brigand. He asked me my name and my country. 'But I know your father!' he exclaimed. 'He was one of my great friends. You are one of the King's household, which has been disbanded, and you are going home: there is no harm in that. I will leave you for a moment to finish your dinner, and give you the time to be ready before me. Tell the ostler to take your horse half a league from here on the way to Vitteaux, and then leisurely go on foot in the same direction. I will take care you are not molested.' I finished my dinner and started as I was bid, without being in any way hindered on my road, and rejoicing in the kindness of the captain who thus enabled me

to escape an awkward interrogatory and several hours of prison, if not more.

The next day I started for Sombernon. I knew the country perfectly. At Pont-de-Pany I followed a narrow path through a gorge in the woods, which brought me at night-fall to my uncle's solitary château, where I found my father also, and we had a merry supper together. I stayed there several days to rest my horse. I saw that my Royalist feelings were far more keen and zealous than theirs. My father had become hardened to changes of government, and my uncle was not very sorry for the events of the 24th of March, whereby he was rid of a clergy whose pretensions gave him some umbrage. At Mâcon I found I had no alternative but to serve the Emperor. I had sworn not to bear arms but for the Bourbons or Liberty; so I determined to leave France for a time and pass into Switzerland; and my mother did not thwart or oppose my wishes.

BOOK VII.

I.

I HAD a great friend, who was an old *émigré* of Condé's army, living in the mountains of the Jura. I resolved to throw myself on his hospitality for a few weeks, and spend a little time with him in the heart of the Swiss mountains, from whence I could easily go further if the state of things became worse.

This gentleman, who was a good deal older than I, was one of those charming people who suit all ages. He was a Royalist, but not a very keen politician, and enjoyed life as he found it. He had that witty and keen sense of humour which rather laughed at enthusiasm or over-zeal, even in the cause of the King. He was a widower; his beautiful young wife was from Mâcon, and had died in her first confinement. Having left his little boy to the care of one of his sisters, he lived alone, half

sadly, half joyously, in the midst of these wild mountains. All parties loved him, because he hated no one, and that he looked upon all opinions, if sincere, as deserving of respect and consideration. His name was M. de Maizod. His little château was only a house dignified with that feudal title, but which the peasants considered as belonging to the village. His nearest neighbours lived at the little town of Moirans. There was an old middle-class family in Moirans, which was not far from St. Claude, who were immensely looked up to and respected in the country. They were called, like the Scotch clans, the Chavériats. Leonard Chavériat, who belonged to every one of note in Moirans, was looked upon with affectionate admiration by the whole population. He was, in fact, all powerful; being lawyer, sportsman, fisherman, and one who could turn his hand to anything, while his greatest delight was to be of use to everybody. He was a Royalist; but his opinions were subordinate to his instincts. It would seem as if the heart of all the mountains beat in that honest breast. The moment he appeared, all, even the little

children, would smile and cry out, 'There's Léonard!' This man, by analogy of character, was the friend and constant guest of M. de Maizod—that is to say, all Moirans was his.

Moirans, St. Claude (where I had also several relations), St. Lothain, Le Fresnoy, the château du Villard, that of Du Prat, that of Amorandes, of which the ruins still started up among the rocks, the little town of Morez (of which the municipal council has lately sent me a grateful message because my family first established there the works which have become so valuable), the villages of Combe and Cascade, recently sold by my father—all this country, in fact, was the property of my family before the Revolution, and was still influenced by them. We had large and extensive farms, from whence, as a child, I recollect the tenants coming annually, and bringing, with their rent, butter and honey as offerings to my mother. These farms were all that remained of the former opulence of the country. The whole of this, which I may call almost my native country, was in a state of excite-

ment at my arrival. The oaks have scarcely deeper roots than old families in certain countries. The province of Franche-Comté is one of these. I love it as the oak loves its native soil. How bitterly I regretted seeing my father, my uncles, and my aunts, sell, for a song, those glorious mountains and lakes, those magnificent pine forests, which to-day would buy back, five or six times over, the patrimony which the Revolutions have destroyed! The forest of Fresnoy, which was bought at that time by my old friend and colleague, M. Dalloz, is now alone worth an enormous amount of money. The incendiary fires of St. Claude have made those trees as valuable as the mines of the New World.

Leonard Chavériat, who knew the history of every stone and ruin in the place, came directly to the château de Maizod to welcome in me the original owner and child of the soil.

II.

The château of M. de Maizod was a little square building perched on the extremity of a flat bit of tableland, which rose, isolated as it were, amidst the farms of the village. At some steps from the house, the terrace, formed by the grey rocks, slopes suddenly down in a precipice towards a retired and wooded valley. M. de Maizod opened his arms to receive me with a joyous cry; he was waiting for me at the front door. I left my baggage in the hall. It consisted of the dust of the road, of which I strove to shake off the hardened mud, of a pocket handkerchief containing a shirt and a pair of stockings, of a white waistcoat, and a woollen cloak folded on my arm. As a pedestrian I could bring no more. A young cook and a gardener composed the whole household of the château. I found myself just as I used to be at Milly in the old days.

'I come to you' (I said to M. de Maizod), 'like a bird who is poising himself on the last branch of the last tree in the forest, un-

decided whether to stay or to take his flight across the fields of Liberty at the first appearance of the sportsman. Do not let me disturb any of your usual habits, but let me only live here a little while in peace.'

I spent a month, in fact, in this quiet solitude without being troubled by the convulsions which agitated the other provinces of France. The Jura mountains were our shelter. To get up, to go to bed, to take long walks on the mountains or in the woods, to sit down in the shade, to talk of political events, to forecast the future, to return at a certain hour to our frugal dinner with Léonard Chavériat and one or two congenial souls—such was our life. It was an idle one, perhaps, but a very enjoyable one. We had almost become Republicans by dint of the perpetual change of rulers in France.

One day we ventured to write to Carnot, who, giving the lie to the principles of his whole life, had consented to accept the title of Count as a pledge of fidelity to the Emperor. We reproached him bitterly for his fickleness. I suppose that he did not deign even to read

our effusion; in any case, he never answered us. Little did I think that I should one day be the government colleague of his son, and that I should find him even more moderate than myself in the handling of the true principles of Liberty. Although we were friends, he would not have accepted from me a decoration of nobility. Our ideas of nobility were those of the soul, and not of any order.

From time to time we went into the neighbouring valleys to partake of the cordial hospitality of my grandfather's old tenants. These men had become the proprietors of the great works founded by him, and which had been sold by his family after his death. The *Gazette de France* kept up our political antipathy towards the Government.

III.

Things were in this state when Léonard Chavériat came to inform me that war having been declared, and the Emperor being in need of men, the prefects had received orders to find out all the young men who had served in the King's household or bodyguard, and to

compel them to march against the enemy, and join the Imperial army. My decision was instantly taken. I exclaimed, 'I would rather take flight or die than fight against the King!' I had told my father so, and I repeated it fifty times a day to myself. Neutrality may be accepted, but apostasy never! I had no time for deliberation. Léonard offered to guide me to the Swiss frontier through the forest of Fresnoy. I accepted the services of so true a friend. His known habits as a sportsman, and the way he was looked up to in the neighbourhood, ensured my safety on the road. I wished good-bye to my host—that best of men! and followed Chavériat. My gun served as a pretext for my departure, and we started towards evening for St. Claude.

We stopped on our way at Combe, a little village at a stone's throw from the town. It has a pretty waterfall, which had been diverted a little from its course in order to work a saw-mill belonging to M. Reverchon, an old tenant of my father's in this part of the Jura. He lived with his wife and sons on the borders of the forest, out of which the

stream rushes in the most picturesque manner. We were treated less as guests than as masters of the house, and after supper we talked of family matters. I confided to them my plan of escape. Everyone was ready to second me in it. I went to sleep lulled by the regular rush of the waterfall and the melancholy creaking of the wheels of the saw-mill. As soon as the day dawned, Léonard woke me, and after having warmly thanked our hosts, we started on our way. Our dogs trotted after us in couples. After following an oblique course across the fields on the lower edge of the mountains in sight of the custom-house officers who knew Léonard, we suddenly entered the magnificent forest which had shaded my cradle, as it was now sheltering my flight. We took the least frequented paths, under the grandest old firs, and walked on in this way for two or three hours. These trees resemble the giants in the Californian valleys, and rise like the great masts of a ship with their leafy sails. I exhausted myself in trying to measure by the eye their height and diameter. We appeared like dwarfs

at their feet. What are revolutions which displace men, as the swaying of the branches displace the birds, compared to the kind of perpetuity of one of these primeval forests? We were never weary of talking of and admiring them. At last, a kind of twilight towards one end of the wood showed us a break in the dark cathedral-like shade we had been so long traversing. Here Léonard stopped. 'Follow,' he said, 'that hollow and unfrequented path which leads up the hill until you come to a shelving bank, which is the boundary or frontier between the two countries. If I see the custom-house officers watching you, I will go and divert their attention till you have passed it. You will then find yourself close to a high road, in which you are safe and free. It will lead you to St. Cergues, a Swiss hamlet on the summit of the Jura, from whence you will see at your feet the lakes Léman and Lausanne to your left, and Geneva to your right. God have you in His holy keeping! You are now in the country of William Tell.' So saying, we embraced and parted. A quarter of an hour after I saw on

an upright stone the arms of the Pays de Vaud. I cried out loud for joy at my deliverance, and walked gaily on to St. Cergues. I asked for the house of M. Reboul, which was immediately pointed out to me. It was the well-known home of a noble Swiss, who had been the guide of Madame de Staël and her friends during the first great Revolution. It was there that Mathieu de Montmorency, Benjamin Constant, MM. de Noailles, and countless other distinguished men, had shaken off the dust from their feet when flying from a land of tyranny to one of liberty. I thanked God who had allowed me to follow in their steps.

I was courteously requested to come in. M. Reboul was gone to see his cows, which were fattening on the rich pasture of *la Calme*. A young lady of remarkable beauty came forward and begged me gracefully to await his return. This young girl, or rather this angel from a higher sphere, had nothing either in her face or dress like any woman I had ever seen before. Her voice was not more strange and fascinating than her features. The calm of

the mountainous region in which she lived seemed to have impreguated the tones in which she spoke to us, ordinary mortals. Her pronunciation rolled out in even syllables as if no human passion had ever stirred the depths of that grand nature. She breathed quietly and softly like a sleeping child. Her dress enhanced her pure beauty. She had on a headdress of black silk, edged with black lace, covering her fair hair. This hair, turned off from her forehead and simply knotted, fell in thick heavy curls down her back. They were plaited or interlaced at intervals with black ribbon. A black velvet body, tightly closed over a white chemisette, unconsciously showed off her beautiful figure. A black silk gown with heavy folds reached down to her ankles, which were as neat and finely formed as those of the fawns in the long grass of Fresnoy. A silver band encircled her small and flexible waist, from whence hung a pair of bright steel scissors. One would have imagined her to be a priestess of Gaul, or a Velléda of Germany, wearing the instruments needed for the sacrifice.

But her face, with her blue eyes and her rose-leaf complexion, had a mingled expression of joy and sorrow, which struck me the moment I saw her. I did not then know that she had only lately lost her mother, and that time had not yet effaced the traces of her grief. She was plaiting a large straw hat with a wide border to defend her neck from the sun, and little bits of straw were scattered on the parquet floor at her feet.

She offered me a glass of wine whilst I was waiting for her father; and we began to enter into a quiet kind of conversation. She, with that calm soft voice, which thrilled me through and through, and I, with a totally new feeling which made my words tremble on my lips. I had a letter of recommendation from Léonard for her father, so that I had no alternative but to await his return. He came home very late, but by that time I had become accustomed to my hostess, and it was Reboul who appeared to me the only stranger.

I gave him Léonard's letter. He read it carefully, and then said we would speak of its contents on the morrow. He told his charm-

ing daughter to go and prepare my room for me. She left us at once, but my thoughts followed her. I do not how it was that recollections of Graziella mingled with this new vision. I could not tell why this angelic apparition gave me at once such a feeling of security and such an inclination to cry.

I supped afterwards with Reboul; his daughter waited on us. Her soft and holy face seemed to me a good omen on the threshold of an unknown future.

IV.

During supper, M. Reboul spoke to me openly of his adventures as guide to the many hundred proscribed or voluntary exiles whom for the last fifteen years he had concealed and conveyed from one country to another. He began by Madame de Staël, whose château of Coppet was not far from St. Cergues. The wish he felt to save his friends had insensibly led him to make a habit of that which had at first been only the impulse of his kind heart. His reputation was spread throughout France and Switzerland, and he had always been for-

tunate in his ventures. He attributed his success to the protection of God, which the prayers of his saintly wife and child had obtained for him. At the mention of his wife his eyes filled with tears. His daughter turned her face away, and covered it with her apron to hide her tears. 'Do not let us talk of this any more to night,' said her father. 'It is time to go to bed. You will stay here till to-morrow,' he added, turning to me, 'and I will give you the best advice I can after I have heard your story, and have found out what I can do for you.' His charming daughter helped the servant to make my bed, and I went to rest to dream of the future. But the face of the Graziella of the Alps prevented my sleeping for a long time.

The next day, at daybreak, I was up and ready to accompany her father. She wished me good-bye, recommending me tenderly to God's care. 'You are very young,' she said, 'to be thus thrown by yourself into an unknown future. Your mother must have many anxieties on your account!' 'Ah,' I replied, 'I have a mother and sisters also, who

pray to God for me. They are younger, but not better or purer than you.' She wrung my hand, and we parted.

After having walked for some time on the brow of the mountain which the dawn had hardly yet lighted, I suddenly burst into a cry of admiration. The whole horizon of Switzerland seemed to me to be emerging from the morning mist; it was like a second creation. At our feet the Lake Léman sparkled, half in light and half in shadow. The mountains of Meilleraie and the rocky Tooth de Jaman, so wonderfully described by J. J. Rousseau, formed the barrier on the Italian side. The Valais, a country of innocence and of shepherds, seemed nestled in a little hollow to the left. Then Vevey and the Château de Chillon shone like fallen stars in the lake. A little further on Lausanne, half town, half fortress, appeared with her dark clock towers, and her winding white walks at the edge of the Berne pass. Then Nyons and Rolle, flooded with the morning sun, seemed to spring forth like sunken rocks, at a low tide, coaxed by the soft waves around

them. Then came Coppet, Prangins, Ferney, each name conveying a history of the past, like stars in the household of God. Last of all came Geneva, placed at the extremity of her lake, and calmly contemplating the multitude of little sails, which the morning breeze propelled across her shining waters. Never, not even at Naples, had I seen so wonderful and glorious a spectacle. At each rung of the marvellous ladder of terraces which we began to descend, new bays, new ports, new towns, new villas, new gardens opened out on our delighted gaze. It seemed as if we were really assisting at the creation of a new world. And it was the world of the poets: the genius of Voltaire, Rousseau, Byron, Staël, Haller, and Gessner opened and bloomed in the sunshine of these glorious mountains. After we had walked for about two hours, always bearing towards the left, Reboul suddenly stopped and showed me a large and imposing modern castle, which rose like a fan with its succession of terraces above the village at the head of the lake.

'Look!' he said to me. 'We will wish one

another good-bye here. That is the Château of Vincy, to which I have led you. I will not go any further, for you cannot lose your way. This castle, which is one of the most beautiful on the borders of the lake, belongs to the illustrious House of Vincy, Lords of Berne—once very rich, now ruined by the vile revolution of 1799. It is now inhabited by the youngest and last brother of those who commanded the Swiss troops in the service of France, and of whom one or two passed into Holland. Some of the other members of the family are married, and have become once more French proprietors. Others have seen long service in the household of the King, while this one spends his winters at Geneva, and his summers in this old family mansion. He is the best man I know to give you the information you seek, and to put you in the way of obtaining what you wish. He has, as it were, the kernel of a little French army, composed of men who wish to fight for the cause of the King of France without joining themselves to strangers. He is, in fact, the principal Royalist agent for the French in

Switzerland. Go and introduce yourself to him in my name, and ask him to look at your papers. They will tell him all.'

I thanked Reboul, sent many heartfelt good wishes to his daughter, and strolled on alone for the château of M. de Vincy. I was not without some uneasiness as to the manner in which I should be received, for I had only this note from Reboul, and my personal appearance was certainly not in my favour. Dusty shoes and worn gaiters, a linen coat and trousers, a felt hat, all out of shape with the rain, a handkerchief to serve as a carpet bag, and fifty Louis d'or hidden in my waistband—that was all I had to boast of. I did not wish either to make a long stay at Vincy, and once that my passport had been *viséed* I hoped to continue my journey. I went down the hill, therefore, rather reluctantly, and arrived, almost with a feeling of regret, at the iron gates which led to the castle.

V.

I pushed open the gate for myself. One felt, by the solitude and the absence of any porter or servant, the ruin which had fallen on this noble and Royalist house. I walked on till I came to a magnificent flight of steps, and was admitted by a servant, who took in my card to M. de Vincy. He was a wizened, ill-dressed little man, and everything about him indicated a certain degree of poverty. He made me sit down in his own room, and asked me to what circumstance he was indebted for the honour of my visit? I presented M. Reboul's note in answer.

'I know nothing,' he replied, 'at this moment, of the state of affairs in France. The armies gathered against the Emperor are composed of English, Prussian, Russian, Austrian, and Italian troops. There are no Frenchmen, I fear, except a handful gathered together by the Prince de Polignac in a village near Neufchâtel called La Chaux-de-Fond. The Abbé Lafond, Malet's only accomplice, is at the

head of this little troop. I will have your passport viséed for Neufchâtel.'

I thanked him, and stood aside whilst a multitude of people and farmers came to transact different affairs with him, or to receive his orders. The same servant introduced them one after the other. I saw many of these men leave miserable little sums in copper on his desk, which was evidently their rent, and which he counted with the anxiety of an apparently rich man who did not know where to turn for the necessary expenditure of the house. Everything showed the pinching of penury in the midst of external opulence. I was filled with pity for him in spite of my admiration for his magnificent home.

When the farmers had finished their payments, M. de Vincy came back to me and gave me my passport viséed. I wished him good-bye, feeling more and more for his unhappy position, and took my departure. Scarcely had I taken half-a-dozen steps towards the iron grille than a carriage drove up and stopped at the steps. Two ladies and a little child got out of it. They were a mother

and daughter, and a pretty boy of ten or twelve years old. I glanced at them and raised my hat as they stopped for an instant on the lower step of the staircase, where M. de Vincy had joined them, and was speaking to them in a low voice. During this conversation I had turned away and had just reached the iron gates when a soft voice recalled me. It was Madame de Vincy. 'Sir,' she exclaimed, 'be so kind as to come back.'

I did so, shyly enough. When I drew near them she added, 'Sir, forgive me for having called you back without having the honour of knowing you. But when M. de Vincy told me the object of your visit, I feared you might not have dined, and as we are just going to sit down to dinner, I venture to ask you to share our humble repast. There is no inn in this village, and it is three hours' march from here to Rolle. Do not refuse us the pleasure of being your hosts to-day.'

I refused on the plea of my dress; but they insisted more amiably than ever, and I was compelled to yield. The dinner was served

immediately; my hostess was most indulgent and kind. Madame de Vincy, the mother, was one of the most beautiful and imposing women I ever saw. She was born a princess of some sovereign house in the Palatinate, of which I have forgotten the name. The Vincys had noble birth on both sides, but Madame de Vincy did not belie her origin. Her height, which was 5 ft. 7 in., gave her the majesty of a goddess without taking away her grace as a mortal, and the blue eyes of a German princess impressed a certain amount of dignity even on her smile. Her face alone revealed the goodness of her heart; the sound of her voice spoke to the heart even before it charmed the ear. Her civility was indeed true Christian courtesy. Never had I seen so remarkable a face. One felt that she was a mother, and there was something filial in the emotion with which her beauty inspired me.

Her daughter, who was infinitely less beautiful but as good and sensible as her mother, was gentle and sympathising in manner; I saw that her soul was a reflection of Madame

de Vincy's, and that she was a shoot of the same stem. She was about sixteen. The boy of twelve had a fine German countenance. Madame de Vincy had two other sons, one in the Dutch service and one in the household of Louis XVIII., who had followed the King to Ghent. They were fine well-grown lads; in fact, their mother was made to bring forth noble-looking sons.

VI.

Our conversation became more and more familiar. We had plenty of subjects in common in the political aspect of the times, and in the strangeness of my own position. They insisted on hearing my history, which I related simply and naturally. I saw that it made a great impression on my hostess, and that the father and son were of the same opinion. The dinner over, I took up my little bundle, and prepared to continue my journey. 'But, sir,' exclaimed Madame de Vincy, 'an idea strikes me. My husband tells me that you are going, at all risks, to join the little gathering of French at La Chaux-de-Fond, in

the neighbourhood of Neufchâtel. I highly approve of your determination not to serve your country with strange troops, who any day may become our enemies. But if you find this French corps dispersed, what do you mean to do ?'

'I really don't know,' I replied.

'Well, then,' she rejoined, 'if you can put up with such accommodation as we can offer you here, why should you not stop a few days till we can obtain some information as to the state of things at Neufchâtel, and let us, for a time, replace to you your mother and sisters?'

I coloured; but my face showed the pleasure I did not dare express. The ladies understood me at once, and Mademoiselle de Vincy, at a sign from her mother, taking my little bundle from my hands, laid it on the table.

'Well,' added Madame de Vincy, smiling, 'try and fancy that we are your mother and sister for the moment. You will not refuse to let us shelter you for some weeks till we can see our way a little more clearly; and will

you not be as comfortable here as on the high roads, or in some bad Swiss inn? Make up your mind to stop with us, for I already feel towards you as to a son.'

'Ah! madame,' I exclaimed with a broken voice, 'how can I resist such kindness, and go against my own heart's leanings?'

'Well, well, then it's all settled,' exclaimed husband and wife at once. 'We will go and order your room, and I hope you will be as comfortable or more so than at the inn of Rolle.'

They gave me a room with a most glorious view over the lake of Geneva, and I found myself treated in all respects as one of the family.

VII.

From that hour my life become most enjoyable. The mother and daughter took possession of me, whilst M. de Vincy, busy with his domestic troubles, was painfully collecting his rents from the tenants of Vincy. I had almost forgotten the object of my journey. But I soon found that the so-called French

army, which had been organised in Switzerland by the Royalist agents of the Pays de Vaud, was reduced to nothing, or contented themselves with some insignificant movements without any result. In the meantime I revelled in the enjoyment of the confidence which my circumstances and age had inspired in the bosom of a hospitable and virtuous family. The charms of Madame and Madlle. de Vincy made the hours pass like moments. After breakfasting under the shade of the trees on the terrace, the carriage used to come round and take us either on the route to Nyons, or by the mountainous paths of the Pays de Vaud, which were endless in beauty and variety. We used to stop now and then, and sit for a while under the shade of those magnificent chestnut trees which seem to belong especially to this soil, and there study the wonderful scenery stretched at our feet, with its lakes and rivers, its smiling villas and clock towers, which are dotted all over the canton of Berne. We returned to the château for dinner, which was as humble and simple as possible. The white

wine of the country mixed with the water of the fountain on the terrace was enough to quench our thirst and gladden our hearts. We talked of the future, of the progress of events in France, of the increase of the European armies, which would, we trusted, ensure the peace of Switzerland. The newspapers from Geneva and Lausanne gave us news, from time to time, of what was passing in the outside world. The letters from Madame de Vincy's sons fostered our illusions.

Occasional visits from French refugees, old fomenters of the revolution against Berne, now furious against Buonaparte, and fanatic partisans of Louis XVIII., acted as mediums of information, often of a doubtful character, on the events of the day. Of this number was a priest, L'Abbé Lémorre, a devoted Royalist, who held in his hands the thread of many of those fruitless conspiracies, and who by his writings kept up the excitement which agitated both countries. I found out this a little later. Danton said of priests like him, 'that they carried their country in the soles their feet.' The sacred fire of Royalism burnt

in his breast, and he spread it as burning coals over all the Jura and Geneva.

There were some Swiss, however, enemies of Berne and its aristocracy, and fearing to see the triumph of the Restoration, who remained faithful to the 20th of March and to the Emperor's cause. I had a proof of this a few days later. I went to dine in the little town of Nyons, to try and glean some news to bring back to my hosts at the château of Vincy. There was at Nyons an inn dear to all old emigrants, kept by a maiden lady, who was well known in the country. Madame de Vincy gave me a line of introduction for her, and I went there for a night. She received me as an old friend. There were about thirty guests at the table d'hôte, at which she presided. Hardly was I seated, without any intention of being remarked by any body, than an angry squabble arose at the other end of the table between some people who had been quietly occupied in eating their dinner in silence, and a Swiss officer belonging to the canton of Berne. I could not help listening to the quarrel, which seemed to get warmer every moment.

'No!' at last exclaimed the officer, 'I am not one of those mean Frenchmen who renounce the great man who has been the origin of all their glory in Europe, and who are at this moment forming wishes for his second fall from the armies of the Allies. And if you don't like my principles, you may, if you please, call me to account for them. I am ready to answer anyone who chooses to contradict me.'

Everybody was silent. Some of the company went away. I was the youngest, the most unknown, and the furthest from the speaker, who was at the extreme end of the long table. I therefore held my tongue, when a young man and two very pretty women who were with him, started up close to a side door which led into the dining-room. Their speaking faces; the deep frown on their foreheads, and the eager eye with which they looked up and down the room seeking for one who would answer and avenge their cause, made me instantly resolve to break the silence.

'Very well, sir,' I exclaimed, rising and turning to the officer from Berne, 'as no one

seems disposed to answer your insolent speech, I shall take it upon myself to reply in my quality as a Frenchman. Yes, sir, I am one of those Frenchmen whom you call mean, because they believed in the reality of abdications, and in the sacred nature of treaties; and did not think that the caprice of a voluntary exile in the island of Elba could dispose at his will of France and of Europe. They still hold to these opinions; and if you wish to be answered other wise than by words, I am ready, and will meet you where you please.'

At these words a low murmur of applause ran through the whole length of the table, which went on increasing till the officer, looking thoroughly ashamed of himself, retired, and I remained confused at the praise I had unexpectedly received. I sat down quickly, rather ashamed of my easy triumph, when the two pretty women, whose presence had inspired me to speak, rushed towards me, and drawing me towards the door I have before mentioned, carried me off through the corridor of the inn to their own room, and con-

gratulated me in terms which I have since heard in the House of Deputies.

'We are proud, sir, to be French women,' they said, 'and to have by chance heard one of the youngest of our countrymen avenge our country by such words after the insults of that miserable wretch, whose only admiration is for tyranny. As to ourselves, believe that we have never made a pact with those who look upon glory as the one good, and that we hailed the restoration of the Bourbons as the return to right and liberty. Tell us who you are, and pray make use of our little apartment here while you are staying in this hotel.'

They brought some punch, and I drank to the health of my enthusiastic friends; after which, thanking them warmly for their kindness, I went back to Vincy. A note from the landlady of the hotel had preceded me: my little adventure, coloured by her good-nature, seemed heroic. They received me in consequence as a Royalist hero. Fortune had served me. I had defended at the same time the cause of the Bernese aristocracy, and that of the King of France.

These two ladies were Mesdames de Bellegarde, doubly famous from the part they had played during the French revolution of 1792 and 1793, and by their enthusiasm for the restoration on the return of Louis XVIII. in 1814. Although very different in expression, they were still very beautiful, a beauty which had exposed them in former times to all the snares of human love and admiration. The eldest, the Countess de Bellegarde, had a face like that of Judith by Allori. She was tall, large, dark, with passionate black eyes, a living picture in fact of enthusiasm. The youngest, also tall and with a beautiful figure, was a great contrast to her sister; she was fair, delicate, and sensitive, with blue dreamy eyes, which often wore an expression of great sadness. They were natives of Sardinia, the daughters of a Count de Bellegarde, and had been left orphans very young. Their father had been in the service of the House of Austria, and their name had long been distinguished among the generals whom the Emperor was fond of selecting from the Italian states, such as the Montecuculli and others.

Left in the country home of their ancestors during the beginning of the French Revolution, they lived in a magnificent château called Des Marches, in the midst of the beautiful valley of Grésivaudan. After having conquered Savoy and Geneva, the revolutionary general, De Montesquieu (then in the full height of his power, though soon after proscribed), had taken refuge in the mountains of Switzerland, to wait for better times, and the province of Savoy had been given up to the proconsul Hérault de Séchelles. Before the days of the Convention, Hérault had been a magistrate and a philosopher, and a model of honourable and high-principled conduct. His beautiful face and figure resembled that of Antinous; he was the 'Barbarossa' of the aristocracy. Elected unanimously by the legislative assembly, he had obtained a high position there, not only by his eloquence and the dignity of his bearing, but by his Jacobin enthusiasm. With his great zeal, his voice, and his expressive face, he became the idol of the neophytes of those days; but, insensibly dragged on by the revolutionary torrent be-

yond his own convictions, he had, like Le Pelletier de St. Fargeau, yielded to the popular tumult, and sacrificed the King to the exigencies and barbaric violence of the republic. Popular favour, however, had rewarded him for this weak compliance as if it had been a virtue. Sent soon after to republican Savoy, he was at the same time a conqueror and conquered; he came to the château of Marches, and saw these two beautiful orphans without a guardian or protector; the one in all the splendour of her grown-up beauty, the other with all the tender grace of budding girlhood. A passionate love for the Countess de Bellegarde took possession of his heart; while his burning eloquence inspired these young girls with an enthusiasm for his own opinions. The two sisters had been introduced by him as models to the fanatical people of those provinces. A little later he became unpopular with his party from his moderation, and Hérault de Séchelles followed Danton to the scaffold, and died an honest republican, a victim to the crimes of the people.

The Countess of Bellegarde and her innocent

sister wished to share his fate ; but even these brutal judges, dazzled by their youth and beauty, would not condemn them. They had lived ever since that time in the Château of Marches, sharing in the society around them, and in the re-action against the Terrorists, of whom they had so nearly been the victims. The events of the 20th of March had revolted them ; they had quitted their château and come to Nyons to live with the Royalists. It was thus that I first became acquainted with them, and in their enthusiastic declarations I recognised the pupils of him in whose political school they had been brought up.

VIII.

Two days after, I resolved to profit by my near neighbourhood to see, at least once before her death, Madame de Staël, who had long been the object of my antipathy on account of her father, and of my enthusiasm as regarded herself. Coppet, which was the abode of M. Necker, had been previously bought by my grandfather, who had kept it a long time without living in it; but all of a

sudden the canton of Berne passed a law refusing the rights of proprietorship to any Catholic; so that he ceded it to I know not whom, and bought in its stead the beautiful castle of Ursy, in Burgundy. I was very curious, therefore, to see Coppet, but still more anxious to see its inhabitants, for whom I was full of respectful admiration resulting from my reverence both for liberty and genius. If I had been less shy, it would have been easy for me to have seen Madame de Staël by presenting myself at the doors of Coppet; but, independently of this feeling, which only yields to great occasions, another reason deterred me, although I did not dare mention it.

The Royalist feelings at the château of Vincy, where I was receiving such genuine kindness and hospitality, were well known to every one; on the other hand, I knew well the semi-revolutionary spirit which M. Necker (that amphibious minister of a revolutionary monarchy) was sure to have transmitted to his daughter. I felt that it would hardly be right for me, as a guest of the Vincys, to go and introduce myself at the château of Coppet

as a pilgrim at the tomb of M. Necker, whom it was impossible for me to admire or to love. 'I should be wanting to two persons,' I said: 'to Madame de Vincy and to myself. I will not go!' Only, as the high road is the property of everybody, I thought a cat might look at a king, and that a glimpse of her would satisfy without compromising me. I knew that Madame de Staël went twice a week to Geneva with certain friends of hers, among whom were two beautiful women, one Madame Récamier, her great friend, exiled, like her, from all countries under the dominion of the Emperor; the other, Madlle. de Constant, a German, of still wider reputation; but, at this period of my life, the admiration of genius extinguished all other in my heart. I saw in Madame de Staël, who had chosen this beautiful companionship as if to enhance her own ugliness, a total absence of all envy, with a stong conviction of the superiority of the intellectual beauty of genius over the material beauty of the body, and I only admired her the more.

IX.

I got up, therefore, very early one Saturday, which was the day they told me Madame de Staël made her weekly expedition to Geneva, and putting a piece of bread in my pocket, I hid myself at a turn of the road from Coppet to Geneva, being partly concealed by a great ditch on the high road, by the side of which her carriage must necessarily pass. I remained there from nine o'clock in the morning till two o'clock in the afternoon, hidden by the shrubs at the side of the road; during which time I amused myself by reading 'Corinne' (that beautiful work of that modern Sappho), and listening with a quick ear to the least sound of a carriage coming from Coppet. In spite of the poetic interest of this beautiful book on Italy, the day appeared to me rather long, and I at last determined to quit my hiding-place, when to my great joy I heard the rolling of two carriages, which left me no doubt as to their occupants. They passed like the wind; the first contained

only two gentlemen with Madlle. Constant; a beautiful person in the flower of her age. I could only, however, snatch one look at her, which was followed by an involuntary cry of admiration. The next carriage, which was an open one, contained two women, whom it was impossible not to recognise. One was Madame Récamier, whose angelic face could bear no other name, and of whom it was said that one look sufficed to bind your heart to her for ever; but her beauty, although it dazzled, did not distract me. Her companion, who was speaking to her in a loud voice, was, however, the person of whom I was in search. I had time to take in her features thoroughly, for the horses slackened their speed at a little rise there was in the ground. Madame de Staël was, as usual, dressed in an Indian turban, of which the varied and well-assorted colours seemed to be magically reflected upon her forehead. This forehead was large, prominent, and high, as if to give space to a whole world of thought and new ideas; it shaded two prominent eyes of magnificent shape and brilliancy; all her expression, in fact, lay in

these eyes; they spoke more than her mouth. Her nose was short and finely shaped; her lips thick and open, made for eloquence or for love; her complexion was pale, but brightened by a look of inspiration. Her arms, which were always in movement, and exposed by short, open sleeves, were white and magnificent; her whole person, though large, was not wanting in a grace which called forth admiration; in fact, it commanded it. The little hill had been climbed. The horses started again at a trot, and nothing remained to me but the dust they left behind them. Genius had passed me with its escort of beauty; but what remained on one's memory was the genius. I could not finish the volume of 'Corinne' after having seen its author! I came back very late and found my friends waiting for me for supper. I was obliged to own to Madame de Vincy what had been the cause of my long absence. 'Why did you not tell me of your very natural admiration?' replied this noble woman; 'in spite of some differences of opinion, we have for Madame de Staël as much enthusiasm as yourself. We would

have taken and introduced you to her. It is impossible to see without admiring her, or to be her neighbour without loving her. Her faults are those of her training and her wit; her good qualities belong to her own heart; the foundation of all her glory is really her goodness.' 'No,' I replied to my kind hostess. 'I would rather have seen her quietly without knowing her; I have had a glimpse of genius, and it was as rapid and fugitive as itself;' and then we began to talk of other things.

X.

I had spent three weeks in this delightful house in a delicious intimacy with the Vincy family; but I knew the extreme poverty of the house, and I was afraid of being indiscreet, and perhaps burdensome. I settled, therefore, to delay no longer my start for Neufchâtel and La Chaux-de-Fond, to seek the French royalist military gathering. They smiled at my enthusiasm, but they let me go. A gentleman from Lyons, who was a great agriculturist, came in the same way that I had done to present himself to Monsieur de

Vincy, and gave me a pretext for departure. I took leave of my kind and generous hosts with a pang; it appeared to me as if I were again parting from my own family. Madame and Madlle. de Vincy had tears in their eyes at wishing me goodbye. I started with my Lyons companion, but promised to return if the gathering at La Chaux-de-Fond disappointed my expectations. At Rolle we chartered a kind of Swiss car to conduct us to Neufchâtel. Our vetturino brought us there in three days, the road winding round the base of the Jura mountains, amidst the most beautiful scenery possible, with the Lakes Leman, Yverdun, and of Neufchâtel to the right, and grand rocks and pine forests to the left. We were perfectly charmed with our expedition, and as our opinions were identical, there was nothing in our conversation to mar our enjoyment of this magnificent scenery. The first question we asked on arriving at the hotel at Neufchâtel was about the French military gathering at La Chaux-de-Fond. No one had an idea of what we meant! I began to fear our royalist

visions would vanish in smoke. My companion was so discouraged that he decided to return to his Lyons property. I, however, was determined to persevere in the search, and next day started on foot for La Chaux-de-Fond. The path led through a beautiful forest of sombre pines and magnificent waterfalls, and I did not arrive there till the morning of the following day. La Chaux-de-Fond was then a poor little Swiss village, situated on the extreme frontiers of France, and inhabited by peasants who were all clockmakers. Its picturesque wooden houses were scattered here and there over the plain which led to the pine wood. My appearance and dress were rather those of a journeyman watchmaker, who was coming to seek employment from one of the clockmakers in the district. I went into the first publichouse I came to, and asked for the address of the head of the staff of the French army. The people looked at one another with surprise, and after having said something in a *patois* unintelligible to me, concluded with a smile that I was wishing to find a French priest named L'Abbé

Lafond, who had been living in the only decent hotel in the village for one or two months, and to whose lodging they proposed to conduct me. I began to doubt the existence of a staff corps, which thus disappeared like a mirage, and which seemed to be represented by an abbé in a wild village on the side of the Alps; however, having come so far, I was determined to see, and I saw. What was called the great hotel of La Chaux-de-Fond was a little house at the end of a long solitary street, on the opposite side to that by which I had come into the village. A young girl, who had volunteered to be my guide, said smiling to the innkeeper, 'Here is a gentleman who is looking for the French army; they told him at our house that its headquarters were with you, and that its general was L'Abbé Lafond!' 'It's quite true,' replied the innkeeper; 'we have got here a gentleman who calls himself the Abbé Lafond, but who says he is a major-general in the French army. If you, sir,' he added, turning to me, 'wish to speak to him, I will go and ask him to come downstairs; in the

meantime, here is a little table, with some fresh bread and cheese, and beer, to refresh you after your hot walk.' They brought me, accordingly, this primitive breakfast, and I sat down to eat it in the best parlour of the little inn.

XI.

I was hardly seated at the table, however, before I saw a little man with a beaming face, between thirty and forty years of age, come rapidly down a little wooden staircase. 'Oh! there is Monsieur l'Abbé Lafond,' exclaimed the servant, and she brought him to where I was sitting. He was dressed in a brown great coat, which was half military, half ecclesiastical. His black stockings carefully drawn up over his well-made calves, reminded one of a priest; while the black cravat and military collar made me fancy that he was an officer. He thus represented a double character, the ecclesiastic below and the soldier above; he was, in fact, made to suit every taste. I got up and bowed, while he came forward smiling, and asked me, 'What had brought me to see him in this out of the way part of the world?'

I begged him to sit down. He said he would breakfast with me, and ordered some eggs, and we entered into conversation while filling our glasses with beer. 'You have come from Monsieur de Vincy,' he said to me at last. 'Here is a letter from him,' I replied. He read it, and then said quietly; 'This is just what I had supposed.' I continued; 'I am come to join the little army which is being organised, I am told, under your orders, at La Chaux-de-Fond. I will not serve with strangers against France, but I am dying to fight for the King against the Emperor; where is the army?' 'The army!' he exclaimed; 'why, it is I! there is no other. Was not I alone, two years ago, the army of a general, who, with the help of a single man, put a whole ministry in prison, and an empire in his pocket? Men after all are nothing; it is the idea which is all in all; the idea is mine, and if I can persuade everyone from here to Besançon (as I have done) that a formidable army has been formed on this frontier, ready to act when the time comes, is it not as useful, and as much dreaded by the

enemy as if indeed numberless battalions were prepared to enter France by this route, to bear succour to the Royalists? Without money, without pay, without soldiers, without arms, I keep a whole province in check, and paralyse both Besançon and Belfort. You see that you come yourself to join us, and you find only a head instead of arms; believe me, it is enough; stay with me, we shall be two instead of one; and when the Emperor has been defeated in the open fields by the armies of Europe, we shall have been believed to have led a general insurrection, and the east of France will think that their deliverance is owing to us.' I fairly burst out laughing. 'From this statement, Monsieur l'Abbé, am I to imagine that shadows are as powerful as bodies, and that imagination surpasses reality?' He replied: 'Have I not already clearly proved in 1813, that if General Hulin had consented to allow himself to be convinced by a ball in his jaw that the Emperor was dead, the empire would have died in reality?' 'You are right, Monsieur l'Abbé,' I answered; 'but a surprise is not a revolution. Some man

comes, more curious, or perhaps, you will say, more obstinate than others. Instead of a well-appointed army he finds nothing but an ecclesiastic; and if he does not want to pass for an adventurer, he blows upon the shadow, and its nothingness is made apparent. Let us have our breakfast together in peace, and I will take leave of you afterwards. I shall not believe again so lightly in representations from a distance, and shall content myself with waiting; while you must be satisfied with my good wishes.' He saw that his army would never arrive at more than one man; but he comforted himself by giving me all the details of Malet's conspiracy, in which he had played the principal part. Fifteen or twenty innocent Buonapartists had been shot to convince the Emperor of the reality of the conspiracy; the Abbé Lafond, who was the only guilty one, escaped. He evidently hoped to play the same game a second time; but I refused to act as his second. I must do him the justice to say, that he was a man of wonderful genius and resources. When he was chaplain of a madhouse close to one where General

Malet was expiating a previous sentence, he felt that he wanted a soldier to pull the strings of a military conspiracy, and persuaded him to undertake it He had but one man, it is true, but he very nearly succeeded. He was confident of succeeding again, but miracles do not happen twice in a man's life. It was impossible to hear any one relate a story which one might think little to the credit of an ecclesiastic, with more confidence in the purity of his motives. He was really a master in political intrigue ; but he had not the art of varying his subject; he always played the same tune. After having studied him for one whole evening, although immensely struck by his genius, I left him the next day without regret, and went back to Neufchâtel, my illusory search after military glory being dispelled. I came back by Berne to the Château de Vincy, where I gave them a full account of the puerilities of the Abbé Lafond. I always wonder what has become of him since, but I never could find out. He lives, and probably conspires still. I have always been astonished not to hear of him as

having been shot in some great conspiracy strangled at the birth; but I believe that there is a special Providence which watches over men of this sort, and that L'Abbé Lafond will probably go to his grave in peace.

XII.

At Paris, the Emperor could not live long on the conspiracy of Elba, and the Royalists and Liberals gave him little time to decide on any line of conduct. He was continually promising reforms; but his only real hope was in the army. Before he was really ready, he made up his mind to take the field. Waterloo was to cut the knot; that day, so fatal to military France, was drawing near! In the meanwhile I resolved to pass into Savoy on the other side of the lake.

There was a boatman in the Savoyard village of Narnier who spent his time in ferrying over the inhabitants of the two countries, from the Swiss to the Savoyard side of the lake. He was known to Mademoiselle ——, the mistress of the hotel where the Mesdames Bellegarde lived. I took leave

a second time, therefore, of my kind hostesses at the Château de Vincy, and went to Nyons. I begged the mistress of the inn to recommend me to the boatman of Narnier as a good Royalist flying from Imperial France, and only wishing to live in peace until the political horizon brightened. The boatman, himself a devoted Royalist, consented on these terms to ferry me over. I embarked in his little open felucca, which was loaded with cattle, towards the end of June; but it was one of those stormy days which made the Lake Leman as tempestuous as the Archipelago. We had, in consequence, a very dangerous crossing, and the waves increasing in violence as we approached the shores of Savoy, prolonged our voyage till far into the night. Luckily, one billow, larger than the rest, threw us safely on the sand. At Narnier I went to lodge in the house of the boatman himself, who consented to shelter me for some hours. During supper I asked him if there were any lodgings in this place which would receive me at a very low price, for my journeys to Neufchâtel and Berne had made a

great hole in my fifty pounds; and if my exile were to be prolonged some time longer, I began to think I must pass over to England or to Russia, and earn my bread by teaching French. The boatman spoke to his daughter (a young woman about twenty years of age) about a little empty house on the borders of the lake, which had been used as a guard-house by the customhouse officers of the King of Sardinia until the breaking out of the war; but which he would be very willing to let to me if I could content myself with such humble accommodation, and if the hay of his poor neighbours, which he yearly deposited there, was no inconvenience to me. 'The house,' he said, turning to me, 'is about a quarter of an hour's walk from Narnier: if this arrangement should be agreeable to you, I would let you the apartment for twopence-halfpenny a day, and would feed you for sevenpence halfpenny a meal; without meat certainly, but with excellent bread, lake trout, and cheese.' That would come to tenpence a day, and his proposal suited not only my purse, but fully satisfied my love of solitude;

so that the bargain was struck, and the very next day his daughter took me to my new quarters.

XIII.

On leaving the village of Narnier, an unfrequented little path leads across some beautiful meadows by the side of the lake. After walking for some minutes in silence with my guide, I heard the regular noise of the waves of the lake grating on the rocky promontories, and dying away softly on the yellow sand of the shore, while the fresh breeze from the lake refreshed my whole frame. At a little distance I perceived a square and solitary building very much like the hull of a ship-wrecked vessel; the walls on the shore-side had only a low door, which was partly hidden by a group of osiers; on the water-side was a little window, low and narrow, like a loop-hole, from whence you could watch the lake without being yourself observed. Window and door, all was shut; there was no sign of life about the place, nor a sound in the house or out of it; it reminded one of the dwelling

of a leper in the middle ages, such as Xavier de Maistre described in his '*Solitude*' some months before; only there was no leper. 'Here is the house, sir,' said the young boat-woman to me, not, however, without a look of some anxiety, as if she were afraid that the mournful appearance of everything would disgust me with the place.

Whilst speaking she put a great wooden key into the lock, and the heavy door rolled on its hinges. A bat, the only inhabitant of the place, flew in my face, blindly knocking its wings against the wall; but I was not thereby dismayed, and we went upstairs to the only room in the house, which had served as the head-quarters of the customhouse officer. The room was not more than eight or ten feet in diameter, with the exception of a window, which remained open to give some air to the forage. Everything was full of hay. 'This is the room,' said hesitatingly and modestly the girl; then, as if ashamed to offer so extraordinary a lodging to a stranger, she hastily added, 'But, of course, it will be emptied and cleaned; and we shall put a nice

bed and table in the place of the hay.' As she spoke she gave unintentionally a little kick with her sabot to the dried grass before us, and out rushed a whole army of mice, which began racing about the room. 'Oh! what pleasant bed-fellows,' I said, laughingly, to the girl: 'Bats and rats! Well,' I added, after a few minutes, putting my head out of the window and contemplating the beautiful waves which dashed gently against the walls of the cottage, the glorious scenery of the mountains of the Pays de Vaud in front of me, and the two promontories which formed the bay of Narnier—'well, I find the house charming, and I will take it.' Her face expanded with pride and satisfaction, while I sat quietly down on the hay. 'I don't want any other bed,' I continued; 'a pair of sheets and a counterpane are all I need; I shall do very well here. I am used to campaigning, and the smell of the hay is rather pleasant to me than otherwise. Are you married, mademoiselle?' 'No, sir,' she replied; 'my father is a widower and old. He would remain quite alone here if I were to leave him; there

would be nobody in the house to make his soup; no one in the boat to mend his sails; no one at the helm to guide the rudder. I could not make up my mind to leave my father.' 'You are a good and noble girl,' I answered, 'and God will bless you for it.' I looked at her with an expression which seemed to say, 'Any man would have been happy to have won so fair a face.' She rowed me quickly back, without speaking, to her father's house. 'I will bring you some fresh bread and milk and cheese every morning for your breakfast,' she said, as we landed; 'and I will fry your fish and make you some coffee at home for your dinner; that is all I can do, I am afraid, as I am not a great "artiste;" you will forgive, monsieur, such plain country fare; it is not like the inn at Nyons, you see!'

XIV.

The boatman was very much pleased to find that his strange little house on the lake would answer my purpose. Everything was arranged that evening to my satisfaction. I dined at Narnier with my host, and in the

evening I went and installed myself in my new abode. All my baggage went in a pocket handkerchief, and consisted of some books brought from Nyons and a pair of pocket-pistols, which I placed in front of my window. I slept on the hay as one sleeps at eighteen. The troubled mice ran about all night, trying to find their accustomed holes, and the bats cried out at dawn of day; but that only showed me that I was not alone. The swallows knocked their wings against my window early in the morning, and were very much astonished to find the panes of glass which had been put in the night before by the young boatwoman. I got up and opened the window, and they flew fearlessly about my room; then I took my pencil, and looking beyond the lake to the little white speck which marked the Château of Vincy, I wrote the following verses:—

Pourquoi me fuir, passagère hirondelle?
Viens reposer ton aile auprès de moi.
Pourquoi me fuir quand un ami t'appelle?
Ne suis-je pas voyageur comme toi? &c.

The daughter of the boatman came to knock

at my door at the very moment I was finishing these verses, which I mentally addressed to Vincy. I gave them to nobody, and I was very much astonished some years after to hear them sung at Paris and attributed to Monsieur de Chateaubriand. They were not worth his while to disown, nor mine to claim. We all remember his touching romance,

> Ma sœur, te souviens-tu encore
> Du château que baignait la Dore,
> Et de cette tant vieille Tour
> Du More,
> Où l'airain sonnait le retour
> Du jour?

Chateaubriand was a great poet in prose, and I was nothing but the nightingale stammering by chance a plaintive air in my solitude. This day was devoted by me to discovering the different aspects of my hermitage; it was one of the happiest days of my life, and is so deeply engraved on my memory that I recall every circumstance of it without difficulty and without notes, although it is half a century ago; as if the hours of another cycle in my life had not already sounded on the belfry of the tower of Saint Point! Alas!

the hours which will soon strike from that tower will be no longer mine! . . . But let us go on.

XV.

A beautiful July sun, with its burning rays, shone through the window and lit upon the fragrant bed of hay upon which I was idly stretched. No sound was heard within or without the house except the rubbing of the wings of the bat against the walls and the timid little feet of the mice pattering on the newly swept boards of my room. Some swallows also fluttered against the window. I got up, and, after having put on my trousers, I sat on the edge of my hay bed with bare feet, opened the window and leant my arms in my shirt sleeves on the stone ledge of the window-sill. The morning breeze drove the slight foam of the waves against the corner of my window; the swallows flew round and round me, dipping the sides of their wings in the water; in the space between the two promontories everything was solemn, calm, and still; but I perceived beyond the blue line of the lake, the Lausanne boat with its heavy

lateen sails, ploughing its way through the waves about half a league from me. A number of white birds, with long triangular plumes, skimmed over the surface of the water between the sky and the ship, alternately disappearing and following it. There was perfect stillness, except for the buzzing of the flies in the sunshine. This delicious silence enabled me to give full vent to my thoughts, which were as tranquil and luminous as the horizon. It seemed to me as if I had nothing on earth to wish for, and that the beauty of nature alone sufficed me; my soul rose towards God without words and rested in Him. After a short time some one knocked at my door; it was the daughter of the boatman, bringing me some deliciously fresh bread and butter and a wooden bowl of milk. On hearing her footstep the bat flew to the darkest corner of the room to hide himself, the swallows hovered round her head, demanding some crumbs as their right; but the mice ran away as I opened the door. She came in and arranged a little napkin as tidily as she could on the solitary chair, as

there was no table, and then we entered into conversation.

She made my bed, that is, she shook the sheets and counterpane on the hay, and asked me how I had slept. I was as hungry as a hunter and as gay as a bird; and, whilst eating, congratulated myself on the perfect tranquillity of my abode. I asked the girl some questions as to the different sites which I could perceive from my window, and scattered some crumbs which the swallows disputed with the mice. I promised her to go and dine in the village two hours after the noonday Angelus had sounded from the steeple of the Narnier belfry, and she gaily ran downstairs. She went back to her father, and told him that the young Frenchman was very civil and very easily pleased; and the father started to get some big trout in the pool below the sandy torrent, which traversed the plain not far from his house. His daughter had brought me some books which the innkeeper of Nyons had given her for me the evening before. I took one of these under my arm and went out, without knowing where I was going,

following the edge of the lake to the left. The shore was covered with fine sand, mixed with beautiful shells, which the tiny waves seemed to throw up under my feet. I picked them up eagerly and then threw them back again to make room for others which appeared to me more and more beautiful as I went on. 'How happy,' I exclaimed, 'must the peasants of this country be! Nature has provided even for their amusements; for they find, at their feet, playthings for their children and ornaments for their wives.' I saw at a distance a fine castle rising out of a little wood at the extremity of the Point. Without thinking, I insensibly turned my steps in that direction, and found it was inhabited by an honest family of gentlemen farmers. They told me the castle was the property of a Savoyard nobleman, Monsieur le Comte de Ceste, the father and grandfather of a large family who lived at Turin and at Chambéry. They met me at the door and made me come into the house. The windows of the drawing-room opened upon the terraces which led down to the lake. It was the same view, although

more grand, as that of my little dwelling. They took me for a student on account of the big book, which I carried like a breviary, under my arm. That was enough to give them entire trust in me, as this people believe in the goodness of everyone who knows how to read. They showed me all over the farm and gardens, and I stayed more than a couple of hours with them. Afterwards I returned to Narnier by a cross-country road across the fields; magnificent chesnut trees, like those of Thonon and Evian, grew here and there out of the hedgerows. I did not meet anyone or anything except some sleek cows ruminating in the shade, and a number of blackbirds who passed me, singing as they flew. This country, poor and almost deserted as it is in comparison with the Pays de Vaud, has been left entirely to nature; it is the more beautiful to men of simple taste, in the same way as freshness of feeling is superior to great riches. Rousseau has already made these reflections, and my whole life has confirmed them. Whenever I came to a rural bit which suited me, I sat down and read

some pages of my book; it happened to be that very 'Confessions of Jean Jacques Rousseau' about which I was mad at that time. What it contains of obscenity has always disgusted me; but his descriptions of nature have ever appeared to me the most wonderful photography of the Creator's works which could emanate from the pen of any writer. Twelve o'clock struck from the belfry of Narnier, and the Angelus bell echoed through the leaves of the trees. I followed the direction of the sound, and found myself at two o'clock at the house of my friend the boatman.

XVI.

Two places were laid at the little table in the wooden cell beyond the kitchen, where the boatman was waiting for me; the young girl was busy thickening a maize soup in a large pot over the fire, while a long-handled frying-pan already lined with fresh butter was laid by the side of a dozen fresh trout beautifully marked with black and pink spots, and seasoned with herbs, which were waiting to be fried in the soft flame made by the vine

branches. A bottle of the white wine of the country and an excellent loaf of fresh brown bread were likewise laid upon the table. The daughter of the house then prepared to help us, and presented us first with two deep old plates full of maize soup almost boiling, which on becoming cool was covered with a thick paste. We eat it slowly in small spoonsfull, in the idle way that peasants do who are resting after their work; and when we had finished our soup the father poured me out half a glass of his sparkling white wine, which I found excellent. His daughter did not sit down at table with him: following the custom of the slaves of old, the women remained standing while the men eat; either because they did not consider the vulgar action of eating was worthy of the delicacy of their sex in the presence of men; or because they abstained from respect towards them, and thought that those who prepared the meals should only taste them by stealth, and in the attitude of servants. The boatman's daughter acted in this way, standing modestly behind her father, and only eating what was left of the soup at the bottom of the pot after us. We then heard her frying

the beautiful trout in the fresh butter; she served them up steaming hot in a great earthenware dish, curiously painted with lines of colour, which made it look like old Raphael-ware or porcelain. The trout were delicious, and I was thoroughly satisfied with my *régime;* a few glasses of white wine, some cream cheese, and some walnuts completed our repast Night fell; the churchwarden, who was likewise the bellringer and the newsmonger of the village, came in and talked politics with my host: it reminded me of the conversations of Machiavelli with the woodman of San Casciano, of which he speaks in his '*Lettres familières.*' Machiavelli is there described putting on the costume of a blacksmith or a villager, which he was to exchange in the evening for his court costume. The conversation of these simple men astonished me very much by its sound good sense. 'The house of Savoy,' they said to one another, 'loved us too much to govern us well; and how could they govern us when they did not dare put on any tax for fear of our murmurs? In a good and wise government there must be soldiers to de-

fend the country, and good administrators to govern it. How could they recruit, dress, and feed their soldiers or ministers without money; and how could they get any money without taxes? Don't talk to us about paternal governments! Buonaparte laughed at both money and men, and we must allow that he governed both Piedmont and Savoy much better than they did.' These words struck me very much, and I remember them still. Popularity is better understood by the people themselves than by those who proclaim themselves its defenders. An hour or two later the boatman gave me my lantern, and I repaired to my solitary dwelling. I lighted my lamp, said my prayers as at Milly, and sleep surprised me whilst I was stammering the simple but holy words which my mother had made me repeat when I was a child at her knee. No sooner did I find myself alone than I became better; it has always been thus with me through life. I am astonished that ascetic books have not dwelt more on the advantages of solitude. Happy those who are alone! when the thoughts of their mother come to help them!

XVII.

My awakening the next morning was the same as the day before. We talked amicably whilst I breakfasted and the girl made my bed; she understood that I had been well brought up, and that she had nothing to fear from me. She sat down on the hay when she had done, and spoke to me with a simple frankness which increased my own modesty and reserve. Men do not understand how much greater a charm there is in this sort of reserve than in licence; it is the only way to show respect for a woman, while the reverse implies only contempt. She went away and I began my day as before, taking a beautiful walk in the glorious sunshine of the lovely month of June, for this year, 1815, was eminently a sunny year. God seemed to have given to nature the serenity He had refused to human politics. I took that day the cross-road from St. George's to Geneva, and went to see the old and beautiful abbey of Ripaille, which had been bought by the Piedmontese general, Desaix. Desaix at this moment was in command of a Buonapartist

column which was fighting an Austrian detachment at the entrance of the Valais. He was a brave and skilful general, who fought *pro aris et focis.* He had some splendid military successes, which hindered the march of the Austrians, though it could not hinder Waterloo. I came back in the evening to Narnier, and found the same supper as I had had the night before. The people admired the courage of the French, but did not join them. Belgium was now the real battlefield. The newspapers from Geneva gave us from time to time some news of their operations, and one felt that it was there they would draw lots for the master of Europe. I went back to sleep with my bats, my swallows, my mice, and the usual noise of the waves. Day by day the boatman's daughter brought me the fruits of her dairy which were as fresh as herself. I own that, in spite of my Royalist principles and feelings, I should have liked the uncertainty as to the future to have remained for ever, so that I might prolong my stay in this solitude of Narnier. The next morning was veiled in fog which became dense about eight o'clock. The

boatman brought his boat under my window and proposed to conduct me to Nyons, where he was bound with some cattle. I accepted his proposal, hoping to find some books and some newspapers waiting for me there. Three hours of west wind brought us into the port of Nyons. The mistress of the hotel, who had been fond of me ever since the adventure with Mesdames de Bellegarde, gave me some books and papers; but told me sadly that it was reported in the country that Buonaparte had gained a second battle; had entered Belgium, and must now be at Brussels; but at present these rumours were not confirmed. I determined to go to Russia and teach; but, in the meantime, I returned to Narnier, where the lake and its solitude, and the boatman and his daughter consoled me. I could not be insensible, however, to the glory of France, which had thus triumphed alone over all Europe conspired against her; but I should have wished it had been for a better cause than to satisfy the ambition of one man.

XVIII.

I continued to live alone in my empty dwelling with my dumb companions. Oh! how happy I should have been if Providence had granted me a dog! One, at last, came to me from a castle near Narnier, who attached himself to me because I petted him, and he found me alone. Whenever a person is unhappy, God sends him a dog; I have proved it twenty times, although man does not always perceive it. I knew one who had such a tender recollection of his master's misery, that he never would take to me after the death of the blind beggar who had owned him; nor eat anything but the scraps which he could pick up, instead of the tempting meal I offered him from my own table, because this food, the offspring of charity, reminded him of his first estate and of his devotion to the poor. It seemed as if he could never forgive me for having tried to seduce him through his stomach. 'You don't know me for what I am worth,' he appeared to say to me; 'my honour is dearer to me than all

your good dinners.' I was rich then, but he was a dog.

The castle of Antioch, close to Narnier, belonged to a gentleman of Autun, whom I had known at Lyons, but with whom I would not renew my acquaintance for fear of having to leave the boatman.

XIX.

The moment the dog adopted me, my solitude ceased; for he never left me. We loved one another, and so we walked, eat, and slept together; and he understood me as thoroughly as I did him. I had now two friends, the dog and the boatman's daughter, and my days were calm, peaceful, and delicious. To live far from the world and leave it to its agitations and disquietudes, was to be like a celestial body, free from the care of things below, scarcely regarding them in fact, and leaving to Providence the task of guiding and directing them. To have no other interest under heaven than the brightness or clouded state of the firmament, as it dimmed or brightened the horizon from my little window;

to go out at the hour and whenever the mood suited me; to discover by chance unknown and beautiful walks, always free from strangers; to choose in the shade a secret hiding-place, where, alone, with my dog and my book, I could let the hours slip by or count them by the monotonous breaking of the little waves on the rocky shore; to follow with my eye the little sails which the morning or evening breeze conveyed to unknown shores, and which perhaps, without my knowledge, knew the secret of my future and unknown destiny; to dream of the secret of that destiny either spent as a stranger in foreign lands, or in the midst of the heroic agitations of Europe convulsed by the great political events which were passing over our heads; to return with slow steps at the end of the day to the boatman of Narnier as the Herminia of Tasso to the shepherds of Idumea; to enjoy, leaning my elbows on the table, the conversation of this simple man and the gentle ministrations of his lovely daughter; to go back, lantern in hand, with my faithful dog, across the lagune on the borders of the lake to my isolated dwelling; to go to sleep feeling myself in the

hands of God on my hay bed, as the swallow in her little nest, until the dawn of day; to spend the next day like those that preceded it, and see on waking the same soft waves breaking over my window-sill, till the boatman's daughter came to wake me and bring me my breakfast—such was my life for a month in this singular retreat. It was the most complete realisation of a dream of solitude that any mortal could well imagine. My happiness was complete, and I do not remember in all my life having ever enjoyed anything like it. If it could have lasted for ever, my life would have been at an end, and the book might have been shut without anything being added to it. Nature the most ideal, scenery the most perfect, solitude the most entire, society the most innocent and limited —a boatman and his daughter—a tiny room, a swallow, a mouse, a dog, a lake, and an horizon, a vague hope of a glorious future, and a bright colouring of youth throwing its halo over all—this was surely everything that humanity could desire. No! never have I lived days that equalled those peaceful hours at Narnier. My spirit of melancholy could

not again find such an Eden; when I recall the thoughts of it, I forget that it was a reality, and think it was a dream. But no! it was not a dream, but very real happiness.

XX.

It was, in fact, too sweet; it could not last, and the hour was come when it was to end. The news of the battle of Waterloo came to me one morning in a little boat rowed by a messenger from Madame de Vincy. I watched it at sunrise out of my window like a seagull whose wings are coloured by the rays of the morning, never dreaming that this little skiff bore for me a new fate—the fate of the whole world. The boat grounded on the sand; I put my head out of window and the messenger asked me if I knew a young Frenchman who had taken refuge at Narnier? I replied that I was the person of whom he was in search. He gave me directly a long letter from Madame de Vincy, and a quantity of newspapers from Geneva. The letter ran thus: 'I do not know whether you will be able to rejoice at the misfortunes of your countrymen; but as

far as we are concerned we cannot help being delighted at the victory of Europe over tyranny. Buonaparte has been bitterly punished for his rash enterprise; he has been entirely defeated and put to flight at Quatre Bras. He is already at Paris, and has no longer any army. Oceans of blood have flowed on all sides,—the French are completely beaten; our own son is badly wounded; but the world is saved. I send you all the details in the enclosed packet of newspapers; send them back to us.' The boat was moored to the shore; the morning breeze carried off the letter. I fell eagerly on the papers which were at my feet, but I could scarcely sit still and read of our disasters. It was impossible to rejoice at the destruction of the whole French army; but, if Buonaparte had won, the cause of the King would have been lost. I was silent and undecided from conflicting emotions. Finally I burst into tears. Was it from sorrow as a Frenchman, or from joy as a partisan? I could not explain this even to myself. Every one will understand this conflict of feeling; but no one can express it:

my tears said what words could not. This is the misfortune of the bad actions into which the ambition of one man drags his country. As a conqueror, it would be impossible to rejoice at his victory; as conquered, one dared not rejoice at his defeat; one could only mourn in silence. I held my tongue all that day and even at my dinner with the boatman. It cost me a great deal to quit this asylum which God had opened for me in the desert; and where, as a stranger, I did not feel myself compelled (according to the principles of my noble father) either to disavow my king, or fight my countrymen. The battle of Waterloo decided the question; I did not disguise from myself that it would bring about the desired and immediate return of the King. Already he was marching towards Paris; the invasion from the island of Elba having failed, nothing remained to France but to express her repentance to Louis XVIII., and to recall the Princes who were to repair her evils and her faults. This state of things was inevitable.

Buonaparte, who had shown himself a real hero at Grenoble, when he presented his

breast to the soldiers who were advancing against him, had for the first time acted as an imprudent general in separating himself from half his forces and in leaving General de Grouchy to chance or to indistinct orders, when his corps ought to have been reserved for twenty-four hours to fight with him and with France. Henceforth he had neither auxiliaries, nor the power of retreat. On his return to Paris everyone found him entirely altered. He was one to whom success was necessary; when fortune deserted him, he gave himself up to despair. His indecision deprived him of all chance of gathering together his scattered forces, so as to die nobly to save France. During his stay at the Elysée his time was spent in giving audiences to men who were either ungrateful or impertinent. One might have said that for the first time he did not know what men were; his very friends betrayed him. His thoughts and his resolutions alternated perpetually between 'Yes' and 'No.' If he had wished to continue the fight he should not have exposed his ruin to the Parisians; he ought

to have gathered together the remnants of his army at Laon, made an appeal to France, surrounded Paris, dissolved the Chambers, and assumed once more the dictatorship, keeping the capital under the sword of Damocles by his army, and preventing, on the other hand, the formation of the Coalition. Instead of this he menaced Paris by his presence, and then went to weep at Malmaison. At last he departed, but too late; and went to give himself up to the English as a prisoner, and to die without honour or grandeur at St. Helena. There his life was one long parody with the playthings of power. He held more to the title of Emperor than to the Empire itself. He was no longer a great man, but only an imitation of one. His death showed us the secret of his life. We pity him, but only admire him by courtesy. Some historians are found who will give a different explanation of the close of his life, but when the true historian shall be born, he will tell us that he died grandly at Fontainebleau and that only his shadow expired at St. Helena.

XXI.

I stayed eight or ten days longer at Narnier, waiting for further news before I returned to France. Fouché, the chief of the Provisional Government, held the strings; Carnot talked and let him act; Caulaincourt was furious at the slowness of the Emperor in deciding upon any distinct line of conduct. In the meantime Louis XVIII. re-entered Paris by selling his dignity to a regicide. My mother wrote to me by Monsieur de Maizod not to return till she could announce that the King was once more fairly established at the Tuileries. I could not leave my peaceful solitude at Narnier without the greatest regret. I continued there a fortnight longer, and employed my time in wishing good-bye to the lake and to the sites where I had been so very happy. A secret instinct warned me that I should never find another spot so much after my own heart. The boatman's daughter rowed me in her father's little skiff to all my favourite bays in

the lake. With my dog I retraced all my steps by the creeks and woods, where I had so often lost my way. All the trains of thought which I had followed during the past month returned to my recollection, and I garnered them up like the wild flowers which the traveller gathers and dries near his heart, so that their perfume might remind him of spots which he will never revisit. After these pious pilgrimages I watched the last rays of the sun lighting up the white walls of the Château de Vincy, walls which had been to me so hospitable and so friendly. The evening breeze carried with it from me all the blessings which could be showered on a spot which contained one who had been to me as a second mother. I was going to sleep my last sleep on my hay bed at Narnier.

XXII.

My night was sad and my awakening still more so. For the first time the heavens were dark with clouds. As I was to go to Chambéry by Geneva, the boatman and his daughter came to wish me good-bye; the father remained to put back the displaced hay in my

room, whilst his daughter, to shorten my land journey, proposed to row me on the lake to the Cape of Bellegarde, where I was to leave her. We embarked, therefore, at seven o'clock in the morning, and launched the little skiff into deep water; but we had hardly gone 300 yards, when, looking back in the direction of my deserted house, I thought I saw something black swimming with effort in our wake. I recognised my dog, that faithful friend who, after our departure from the shore, thinking that we should speedily return, had discovered that we were about to double the cape to our left, and could not resist the impulse to follow his master to the opposite coast. The poor fellow had miscalculated his strength; his stertorous breathing came to us across the water in gasps and sobs. We instantly dropped our oars and turned our helm towards Narnier, striving to meet him; but it was too late, and when we stretched out the handle of the oar he could not seize hold of it, and was drowned, exhausted by his efforts. We got hold of him, however, and dragged him into the boat; but we only

rescued a dead body, the loving eyes of which followed us still! We burst into tears at the death of this faithful friend, the victim of his tender fidelity. The boatman's daughter promised me to bury him on her return at the door of my little house. Then she resumed her oars, and cried quietly until we reached Bellegarde. I could not speak either, fearing that our farewell would end in a sob. Silence and tears, on both sides—such was our parting. The silence of emotion on my part; on hers tears and the dead body of the dog under her feet: what words could better have expressed our sorrow! The wind blew towards Narnier. Each time that a rise in the ground enabled me to see the lake I watched the poor girl motionless in the boat kneeling opposite the dog, wiping her eyes. She could not see mine, but they were equally full of tears. This event greatly saddened me. I arrived very late at Geneva, with my little bag on my shoulder, and went to lodge at the hotel called *Les Balances*. The next evening I slept at Frangy, and it was the end of the third day before I arrived at Chambéry.

XXIII.

I knew Chambéry since my first visit to Italy; my old college friend (of whom I long ago spoke) lived there, the nephew of the Count de Maistre, who was then Sardinian ambassador in Russia, and whose family held a distinguished position in the town. This family, with whom hereafter I was to become so very intimate, was then composed of four brothers. The eldest was the Chevalier de Maistre, author of *Le Lépreux de la Cité d'Aoste* and the *Voyage autour de ma Chambre*; two inimitable books for agreeableness and depth of feeling. He was still in Russia, where he married a rich and distinguished wife. The next was the Bishop of Aosta, the author of several remarkable sermons, living at Chambéry, an accomplished man, still young, full of merit and originality, and one whom Sterne alone could paint. There was a sweetness in his goodness, and a natural fun even in his piety, which made him irresistibly attractive. You might imagine Yorick and Fénélon kneaded into the

same mould and producing a thoroughly honest man. The third, who was the eldest in point of wit and cleverness, was the famous Count de Maistre, ambassador at St. Petersburg. He was certainly a writer of the first rank, and I should be the last to disparage his ability; but I, who knew them all so well later in life, infinitely preferred his two more modest brothers, the chevalier and the bishop, who were original without effort, and produced *chefs d'œuvre* without any pretension, as the marmot of the Alps produces its soft fur. I even preferred his youngest brother to him, who was only the colonel of a brigade in Savoy, and who had never written anything in his life, contenting himself with admiring his brothers; in a word, the whole family, —brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces— were all remarkable in their different ways: it was impossible not to esteem, admire, and love them all. These Le Maistres were in fact an unique family, whose parallel could scarcely be found in Europe.

XXIV.

The only member of the family with whom I was intimately acquainted at that time, although we had rarely met since the days we had spent together in the Jesuit College at Belley, was Louis de Vignet. His wit and his high character made him worthy of his uncles; but, although excellent at bottom, he was less simple and natural than they were. His genius was incontestable, but he was inclined to be wilful. He knew his own worth, but he conceived, in consequence, as great an esteem for himself as he had an ill-disguised contempt of every one else. I must make an exception, however, for his own family, because his admiration of everything belonging to them reacted also on himself. It cost him nothing to allow the superiority of his own people as it completed his own. To praise his uncles was to praise himself. He was only a Le Maistre on the mother's side, as she was their sister; but in that family genius had no sex, and she was as charming and remarkable a person as her brothers. To be a relation, however dis-

tant, of such a family was an honour; but Louis was very just towards all those of whom he had once appreciated the merit. In that way I had nothing to complain of. He had a higher opinion of me at college than I deserved. His friendship had blinded his judgment; in a word, he loved me passionately. No sooner had he heard that I had arrived at Chambéry than he rushed off to announce it to Colonel de Maistre, his uncle; to his aunt, the colonel's wife; to the Bishop of Aosta, and to some charming and very pretty cousins, the Mademoiselles Constantin, who lived in a country house at Bissy with the colonel. He was just then madly in love with the prettiest and most interesting of these cousins; but this passion did not last. His fickle heart soon found other charms, while the object of his love lived sadly and died blind. She had lost her sight with crying at her cousin's inconstancy. The imagination of Vignet was far too vivid to be relied on. He was only faithful to his fancies for the moment; but these fancies had, while they lasted, all the seriousness and melancholy of a great passion.

XXV.

Vignet hastened to seek me at the hotel and to carry me off to Bissy. He had predisposed all the family in my favour. We went first, he and I, to see the woods and the water of La Laisse, in that beautiful Cashmere valley which Chambéry hides in the folds of the Alps. Indian dreams accompanied us. From thence we went to Charmettes, the house of Madame de Warens, the lady who was so adored by Jean Jacques Rousseau, and who was equally beloved by her. Here they lived together an ideal life of affection. Later, he was deceived by her, and abandoned her himself. He was ungrateful, and became an adventurer and a sophist, because he did not know how to be faithful to nature and to love. In those days we were not so severe in our judgments; youth and love made us believe that everything should be forgiven to genius. We spent a whole morning rambling over the deserted house of Charmettes, and especially the vine-trellised arbour at the bottom of the garden, where Jean Jacques Rousseau had given full vent to his tenderness.

XXVI.

The next day Vignet carried me off to his tailor at Chambéry, where I changed my exile's clothes for a more decent traveller's dress. At dinner time he took me by a shady and picturesque path to Bissy. It is an isolated village, situated on the slope of the Cat Mountain, at the extremity of the lake of Bourget, which dwindles at this end into marshy meadows. Richly cultivated fields of Indian corn and a wood of old firs cover the slope of the *Mont du Chat* almost down to the court of the little square villa, where a fountain, of which the water falls into a circular basin, sends up continually its gentle murmur: here horses and cows quench their thirst, and white pigeons and dark swallows skim on its surface. The windows and door of the house open on the court opposite the mountain; on the other side is a terraced garden, and below, a meadow full of great walnut-trees, which I might call the tree of Savoy, and round which the vines twine and fall in festoons the whole height of the trunk, as if to accustom themselves to the

olive and orange trees which they will embrace on the other side of the Alps.

XXVII.

As soon as we arrived, Vignet called his uncle, the colonel, who opened the glass window of the dining-room which looked into the court, and came to embrace me as if I had been the eldest of his nephews. He was a little man with a cordial, gay, and sensible face, still wearing a blue coat without epaulets but of a military cut, which marked his profession. He introduced me to his wife, a charming person, whom the colonel had loved tenderly from his earliest years, even before the Revolution. She was his cousin, but he had been compelled to leave her at Chambéry in 1798 to fight for the King of Piedmont. On his return from his forced emigration he had joyfully married her, and they had been as happy as possible ever since. She was rather stout, with a face in which goodness and candour were happily mingled; and there was an expression in it of thorough content, as of the fruition of a love long waited for; while the sound of her voice

seemed to say, 'I am perfectly happy, and I now only ask of Heaven the happiness of others.' Her two nieces Constantin were sitting at the table by her side. I at once recognised in the face of the eldest the girl of whom Vignet had given me such a glowing description. She had a languid grace which generally belonged to the young beauties of Savoy. All the family received me as if I had been their brother, and I felt as if I were at home. Louis had described me as a Royalist and a poet, but I only accepted their praises for the first quality. By the time we had arrived at the dessert, these acquaintances of an hour had already become to me like old friends. They gave me a room not far from that of my old college friend, from whence I had a charming view over the beautiful valley of Nivolet and the village of Servolex, where the eldest brother of Louis Vignet lived in a very pretty country house. On the horizon to the left glittered the blue lake of Bourget, where, many years later, I was to know a love more pure and more faithful than that of Jean Jacques Rousseau. After dinner, Louis took me out and

explained the country to me. We did not come in till sunset. Then we talked of Waterloo and of all the things that had happened in France. Savoy was undecided then, but we felt that when the peace came she would again become Piedmontese. Colonel de Maistre had already been pointed out as ambassador to arrange this in Paris. Joy and hope shone on every face, and I could not feel annoyed at the natural satisfaction of a country which was about to regain its independence. In the evening arrived the Bishop de Maistre, who, as I said before, was the colonel's brother; his simple benevolence and cordial gaiety added to the pleasure of the evening. He told us all sorts of stories connected with his past life, and we laughed heartily at the amusing and innocent recollections of his friendship with Madame de Staël and other remarkable persons. His gaiety, united to his piety and high character, made him the delight of the family circle. The colonel, his wife, and his pretty nieces were never tired of listening to him. He only stopped to go and say his office.

Thus passed our first day at Bissy. All

the others were like it. Occasionally various relations and neighbours came to congratulate the colonel and the bishop on the restoration of the King of Sardinia and of their own fortunes. Piedmontese troops were marching upon Chambéry. The news from France left no doubt as to the re-establishment of the Bourbons. I only waited for a line or a sign from my mother to rejoin her at Milly. The second invasion had been in all ways less serious than the first.

I have already said that all our days at Bissy were alike. Vignet treated me as a brother, Colonel de Maistre as a son, his nieces as a cousin. We passed our days in walking or driving in the fir woods, or in the meadows, or on the soft grass which sloped towards the lake of Bourget and the valley of Chambéry. At dusk Madame de Maistre and her pious nieces always went to a little chapel, where the old rector of La Motte said the Rosary as regularly as his daily Mass. We all shared in these services with regularity and devotion. The example of this perfect family, the happiness

of thinking that I should soon be able to return to my own country, with my father and mother, and the knowledge that they were in safety in their country-home, gave me feelings of gratitude which brought back to me the piety of my childhood. Except in the solitude of Narnier and at the Château of Vincy, I had never spent a more enjoyable time. At last the long-wished-for letter from my mother arrived, telling me that I had no longer anything to fear, and that I could return to Mâcon to rejoin the King's guard, which was about to be re-organised. I wished a joyous good-bye to the colonel and to the charming family, whose home-life resembled so much our own; and then took my place in the Savoy diligence to return to Lyons, and so on to Mâcon.

This is the whole history of my emigration. It consisted, in fact, of only three happy and innocent visits, where I was treated as the son of the house, without in any way having been wanting to the love of my country. I was happy not to have failed in my duty either towards France or to my King.

XXVIII.

My father, mother, and sisters received me with a tenderness as warm as it was touching. They congratulated me on having been so well received everywhere, in spite of my being a perfect stranger; and my mother wrote a letter of heart-felt thanks to Madame de Vincy. When we came to discuss my future career, my father felt that my birth, however honourable, would not give me much chance of advancement in the King's guard, which was reserved for the sons of emigrant nobles. He told me, therefore, to go again and offer my services, but not to lose my youth in a fruitless waiting, and to resign after a little time with such of my companions as were in the same position. I went to Paris, and then passed some days at Beauvais. Eight days after I was recalled to Paris, and ordered to resume my military service. I rejoined my corps accordingly; but, after having finished my turn of duty, I gave in my resignation, as well as the greater part of my companions in the same corps, who had too

much fortune to care for a pay of 200 francs, and whose families were too distinguished for them to like to remain without a fortune in the King's guard. Soon afterwards I returned to Mâcon.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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